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THE NAPOLEON ROMANCES.

THE COMPANIONS OF JEHU.

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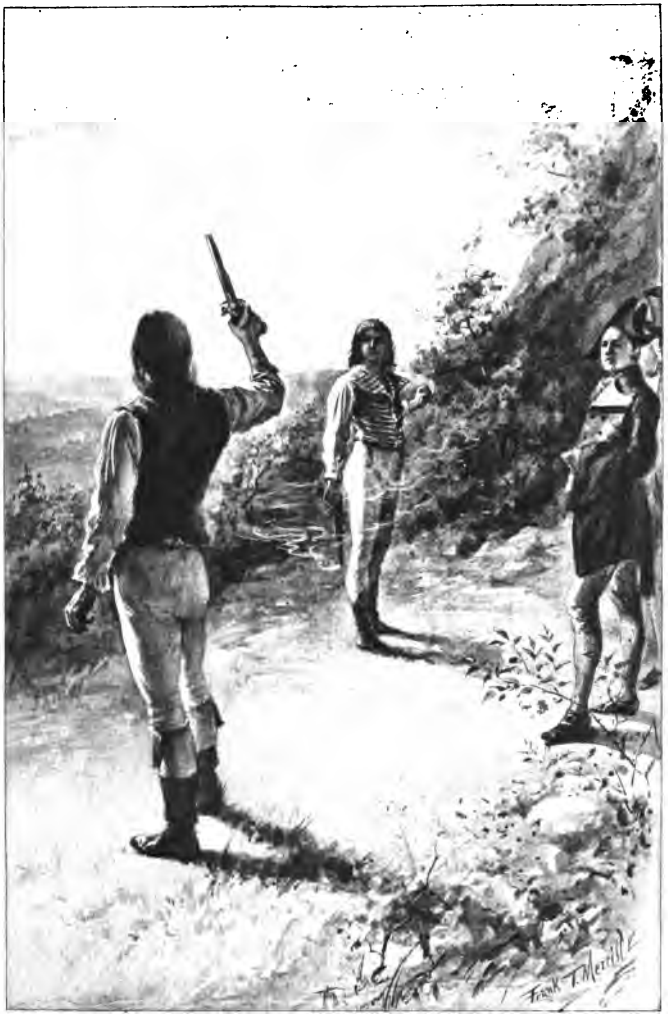

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THE DUEL.

Drawn by F. T. Merrill.

THE COMPANIONS OF JEHU, I. *Frontispiece.*

THE

COMPANIONS OF JEHU.

BY

ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

BOSTON:
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY.
1894.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

It is impossible to deny that the surpassing genius of Bonaparte was powerfully seconded — notably at the beginning of his career — by that mysterious agency which is commonly called "luck." It was nothing more than a happy chance which led him to Toulon in 1793, when the Republican army was besieging that city, and afforded him the opportunity, which he was so quick to seize, of displaying his marvellous talents in the reduction of the apparently impregnable stronghold which had been put in English hands by the royalists in the earlier days of the Revolution. In like manner, it was the fame of that exploit, which had survived all attempts to belittle it by persecution, which led Barras to place him in command of the troops of the Convention at the time of the insurrection of the Paris Sections under the lead of the Section Le Peletier on the 13th Vendémiaire (5 October, 1795), when his masterly dispositions recovered

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the ground that had been lost by the incapacity and indecision of his predecessor, General Menou, and made a speedy end of what seemed to be, and was, a dangerous revolt, among the better class of Parisians. The 13th Vendémiaire was a protest against the decree of the expiring Convention, providing that two thirds of the members of the legislative body provided for in the new Constitution of the year III. should be chosen from the members of the Convention, — an enactment based upon motives directly contrary to the absurd scrupulousness which had led the old Constituent Assembly to decree that none of its members should be eligible for election to the Legislative Assembly, by which it was succeeded.

But the Goddess Fortune never declared herself more decisively in favor of the "Man of Destiny" than when she caused the makers of that same Constitution of the year III. to create an almost inevitable antagonism between the legislative and executive powers of the government constituted by that instrument, by allowing the executive to withdraw itself from the control of the legislative branch, and providing no mediatorial power to spare it the alternative of open rupture or complete submission. It was this fatal defect which did more than anything else to smooth the

way for the conqueror of Egypt on the 18th Brumaire.

The Constitution of the year III., which was promulgated by the Convention on the 15th August, 1795, and went into force on the 26th of October following (4th Brumaire, year IV.) when the Convention was dissolved, provided that the government of the Republic should be vested in a Directory of five members, and a legislative body, composed of two chambers, the Council of Ancients and Council of Five Hundred.

The result of the 13th Vendémiaire was that the minority of the Councils, who were chosen by the electors to sit with the two thirds chosen from members of the Convention, were taken from the party hostile to the Convention; and the majority met this expression of the wishes of the nation by choosing five regicides to the Directory, — Barras, Carnot, Rewbell, La Reveillère-Lepaux, and Letourneur. As one third of the Councils changed every year, but only one fifth of the Directory, it was not long before the executive with a majority of regicides found itself at open war with Councils which contained a majority of reactionaries.

The result was a succession of *coups d'état*, beginning with that of the 18th Fructidor (4 September, 1797), which is truthfully and interestingly de-

scribed by Dumas in "The Whites and the Blues,"[1] when the Directory triumphed, and wreaked a cruel vengeance upon men who had deserved better of them and of the country, — a *coup d'état* of which it has been said that "it destroyed the independence of a nation wearied of changes, and of the various parties by whom it had been so often deceived."

The places vacated by the defeated minority of the Directory, Carnot and Barthélemy, the latter of whom had previously replaced Letourneur, were filled by François de Neufchâteau and Merlin de Douai, the former of whom was soon succeeded by Treilhard.

History was made very fast in those days. Bonaparte was with the army of Italy, when the *coup d'état* of the 18th Fructidor took place. His marvellous successes in Italy and in Austria, however much

[1] "The Whites and the Blues," although written at a later date than the "Companions of Jehu," deals with a somewhat earlier period. It is largely devoted to a narration of the events of the 13th Vendémiaire and the 18th Fructidor, especially with reference to the part taken by Bonaparte therein. The Companions of Jehu, with Morgan as their leader, figure largely in the romantic portion of the work, in which the heroic Cadoudal also plays a part of some prominence. The "Eighth Crusade," which is appended to "The Whites and the Blues," is concerned with the leading events of the campaign in Syria. We are there introduced to several others of the characters who figure in these pages, — notably Roland de Montrevel, then just developing the characteristics which made him so dear to his idolized leader.

they may be marred in the eyes of posterity by his utter sacrifice of all the ordinary rules of international comity in such transactions as the violation of the neutrality of Venice, and the subsequent partition of its territories in the treaty of Campo Formio, — his successes, we say, had placed him in the public mind far above the members of the Directory, and he had begun to do more than dream of the day when he should be called upon to succeed them. But although he hated and despised them, he was led to sustain them in their quarrel with the Councils, both by his interest and his feeling, — by his interest, because the triumph of the constitutional party would render a military dictatorship impossible; and by his feeling, because the opposition, while blaming the excess of power usurped by the Directory at Paris, could not, without stultifying themselves, countenance the vastly more glaring abuses of his own authority in Italy, which indeed they had already condemned. It has been well said that "the 18th Fructidor, 1797, was the logical forerunner of the 18th Brumaire, 1799."

And so, as Dumas has told us in "The Whites and the Blues," he sent General Augereau to Paris to assist the Directors against the constitutional opposition, on the ground that they were royalist conspirators, and furnished them with the proofs

of Pichegru's correspondence with the Prince de Condé.

On his return to Paris on the 5th December, 1797, Bonaparte became at once the centre of observation, and was made the recipient of banquets and fêtes which attested his unsurpassable popularity. The Rue Chantereine, on which his modest house was situated, was renamed Rue de la Victoire by the municipality, as a delicate compliment to the hero of the Bridge of Lodi, and of Arcole. There is no doubt that many people were already urging him to seize the reins of power, and that the Directors knew it well. But they knew also that nothing was as yet ready for the dictatorship, although they were seriously alarmed at his increasing popularity and secretly did all they could to diminish it, while they warmly urged him to undertake the enterprise which was to crown his glory, and was announced to Europe through the title he received of "Commander-in-Chief of the army of England."

During the two months which immediately followed his return, neither his correspondence nor his acts betrayed any sign of any other purpose than the invasion of England, although the vast and magnificent schemes, of which the conquest of Egypt was but a trifling part, had long been forming in his brain, and it is reasonably cer-

tain that he never intended to invade England at all.

"Too much stress," says a recent writer, "cannot be laid upon such indications coming from so crafty a nature; and the first intimation of a change of purpose has more the appearance of stripping off a mask than of awakening from a dream." [1]

Early in March he made known his plans for an expedition to seize Egypt and Malta to the Directory, whose ready consent, in view of the unsettled state of the government and the prospect of a fresh coalition against it, can be explained only by their dread of the rising power of this man, whose ambition increased with his increasing fortunes.

The funds required for the expedition were supplied by the occupation of Rome and the invasion of Switzerland, — both acts utterly indefensible, and for which the most trivial pretexts were alleged.

On the 19th of May, 1798, the vast armament set sail from Toulon, carrying with it almost every officer who had youth, energy, and daring, for the Directory, in their eagerness to be rid of Bonaparte's presence, allowed him to carry off the strength and flower of the nation.

It has been boldly asserted by writers hostile to

[1] Captain A. T. Mahan in "The Influences of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire."

Bonaparte, — notably by Lanfrey in his "History of Napoleon," — that the Egyptian expedition was undertaken by him with the expectation that the government would experience reverses during his absence, and that his return would be essential in order to stem the tide of defeat. But such writers go further than the evidence warrants, even if we admit the possibility of such a daring attempt to play with the welfare of the Republic. For although the reverses did not fail to come, they were mainly chargeable, as Captain Mahan has conclusively shown, to the fatal event which destroyed the foundation upon which Bonaparte's Oriental visions rested, restored the supremacy of the Mediterranean to Great Britain, and renewed the courage of all the enemies of France throughout the world, — the glorious and decisive victory of Nelson in the Bay of Aboukir, on August 1, 1798, known to history as the Battle of the Nile.

The year which followed, while Bonaparte and his army were cut off from all communication with the European world, and their fate was altogether unknown, was occupied by him in the conquest of Egypt, and the campaign in Syria, terminating in the fruitless siege of Acre. He returned to Egypt in June, 1799, and on July 25 defeated the Turks in the land-battle of Aboukir.

Says Captain Mahan: —

"After the defeat flags of truce passed between Bonaparte and the British commodore" (Sir Sidney Smith, who had had much to do with the stubborn and successful defence of Acre), "through which the former received English newspapers up to the 10th of June. By them he learned the victorious advance of the second coalition, and the defeats of the French in Germany and Italy. His resolution was speedily taken to return to France. It has been disputed whether this was a sudden determination not before entertained, as asserted by his secretary Bourrienne, or whether it represents a purpose gradually and naturally formed. It is, however, certain that the thought had long been familiar to him. . . .

"In truth, his keen military sagacity, resembling the most delicate yet most highly cultivated intuitions, had divined the misfortunes awaiting France at the time he learned by the Raguson. ship that Naples had declared war, and that all the Powers were arming."

He left Kléber in command of a diminished and prostrated army, and landed at Fréjus on the 15th of October, 1799.

The news of his arrival was published in the "Moniteur" before it had completed its publication of the accounts of the campaign in Syria and the

youthful general's other exploits, which had come to hand with the news of the battle of Aboukir, and had produced an extraordinary effect altogether out of proportion to their real importance.

In May, 1799, the elections of one third of the Councils had resulted in making both of those bodies overwhelmingly hostile to the Directory, and they had taken revenge for the 18th Fructidor by the 30th Prairial, when, Sieyès having been chosen to take the place of Rewbell, whose term expired, Treilhard, La-Reveillère, and Merlin were compelled to resign, and their seats were filled by Gohier, Moulins, and Roger-Ducos. Bonaparte was quick to see that the power was passing out of the hands of the Directors, and that his hour had come. Less than four weeks after he landed at Fréjus, the 18th Brumaire (9th November, 1799) had come and gone, and the young man of thirty was in fact, if not yet in name, the supreme ruler of France. Sieyès and Roger-Ducos joined him in the provisional government, until the Constitution of the year VIII. was adopted by the subservient Councils, and Bonaparte became First Consul, content to bestow upon Cambacérès and Lébrun the empty honor of association with him as Second and Third Consuls for the few months which intervened before the Consulate for life was bestowed upon him.

Dumas is, as always, scrupulously accurate in the strictly historical parts of the narrative. Indeed, as he has himself said, the "Companions of Jehu," like "The Whites and the Blues," is romanticized history rather than historical romance. The events of the 18th Brumaire and of the days immediately preceding it follow very closely the most authentic accounts, and the author has followed his customary plan of weaving into his work innumerable small details of undoubted historical truth. Such, for instance, are the account of Madame Bonaparte's reception, and her husband's different manner of receiving the different generals, the proposition to dine with the Gohiers on the 17th Brumaire, and the invitation to the early breakfast on the 18th. By assigning to Moreau the compromising post of standing guard over the Directors at the Luxembourg, Bonaparte rid himself of the only rival whom he dreaded. Moreau fell into the snare, repented when it was too late, and remained for the rest of his life crushed by the "remembrance of Brumaire."

It may be said that the letters between Pitt and Bonaparte, of which Sir John Tanlay is made the bearer, were really exchanged through Lord Grenville, then Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

Posterity has not failed to do justice to the magnificent qualities of the galaxy of noble-hearted

men by whom Bonaparte was surrounded, many of whom would have appeared of herculean stature by the side of any other than their leader.

In his own preliminary chapters the author has fully stated the authorities upon which he has based those portions of the narrative which deal directly with the insurrections in La Vendée and Bretagne. After the pacification of those provinces by the firm but kindly hand of Hoche in 1795, the efforts of royalist agents and the facility with which supplies were received from England caused the spirit of revolt to break out ever and anon, and the story is always the same, — of absolute forgetfulness of self, and almost incredible heroism in behalf of a selfish and ungrateful race.

As it had been in 1793 under Charette, Stofflet, and La Rochejacquelin, so it was in 1799 under Comte Louis de Frotté and the indomitable Georges Cadoudal.

"The Consuls think" — so wrote the First Consul to Hédouville January 5, 1800 — "that the generals ought to have the chief rebels shot on the spot, when taken with arms in their hands. . . . However crafty they may be, they are less so than the Arabs of the Desert."

His impatience and irritation were further shown in his proclamation of the 11th January. "Let the

brigands find no asylum against the soldier who pursues them, and if any traitor dares to receive and defend them, let him perish with them."

His historical interview with Cadoudal took place somewhat later than this. He almost immediately regretted that he had allowed him to escape, and when he heard that he had returned to France after a short visit to England, he wrote Bernadotte letter after letter, urging him to get rid of him by any means.

"Take that rascal Georges alive or dead," he wrote on the 4th June, 1800. "If you once get hold of him, have him shot within twenty-four hours, as having been in England after the capitulation."

Again, on the 4th July, "Capture that wretch Georges, and have him shot in twenty-four hours."

These expressions sufficiently betoken the First Consul's fear of the man, when we reflect that there was at this time no insurrection either in Bretagne or La Vendée.

A love-episode which has for its hero a royalist noble of La Vendée could not well have any other than a tragical conclusion; it is none the less engrossing, however, and the final and touching catastrophe is heightened in interest by assigning to the

mother and brother of Amélie leading rôles in the ruin of her lover. In no other of his books has Dumas been more successful in delineating characters which appeal to the admiring and affectionate interest of his readers.

LIST OF CHARACTERS.

Period, 1799–1800.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE, General of the armies of Egypt, afterwards First Consul.

JOSEPHINE, his wife.

JOSEPH BONAPARTE, LUCIEN BONAPARTE, } his brothers.

FAUVELET DE BOURRIENNE, Napoleon's Secretary.

CAMBACÉRÈS, LEBRUN, } Second Consuls.

GENERAL BERNADOTTE, brother-in-law to Joseph Bonaparte.

HORTENSE BEAUHARNAIS.

EUGÈNE BEAUHARNAIS.

MM. BERTHIER, SULKOWSKY, CROISIER, *aides-de-camp* to Napoleon.

GENERALS DESAIX, CHAMBERLHAC, MARMONT, KELLERMANN, CHAMPEAUX, RIVAUD, VICTOR, and WATRIN,
MARSHAL MURAT,
COLONEL DUFOUR,
} officers serving under Napoleon in the Italian Campaign of 1800.

GENERALS BEURNONVILLE, MACDONALD, MOREAU, LEFEBVRE, DEBEL, LANNES, JUNOT,
COLONEL SEBASTIANI,
REGNAULT DE ST. JEAN D'ANGELY,
MM. MONGE, BERTHOLET, LAPLACE, ARNAULT, BOULAY, DE FONTANES,
} adherents of Napoleon.

M. Barras,
M. Sièyes,
M. Moulins,
M. Roger Ducos, } of the Directory governing France prior to the Consulate.

Citizen Gohier, President of the Directory.

MM. Barillon, Fargues, and Cornet, of the Council of the Ancients.

Madame Gohier, wife of the President of the Directory.

M. de Talleyrand, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Joseph Fouché, Minister of Police.

M. Dubois-Crancé, Minister of War.

General Jubé, commanding the Luxembourg under the Directory.

General Hédouville, commanding the Republican troops of la Vendée.

Generals Hoche, Schérer, Joubert, Masséna, Pichegru, Brune, Lecourbe, Hatry, Molitor, and Kléber, } officers in the armies of the French Republic.

Admirals Bruix and Ganteaume.

Santerre, a brewer.

Citizen Thomas Millière, a commissioner of the Executive power.

Colonel Louis de Montrevel, called Roland, *aide-de-camp* to Napoleon.

Madame de Montrevel, his mother.

Amélie de Montrevel, Roland's sister.

Edward de Montrevel, Roland's younger brother.

Sir John Tanlay, an Englishman, friend to Roland.

The Duke of York,
Generals Souvaroff, Kosahoff, O'Reilly, Klenau, Hotze, Rosenberg, Bellegarde, Hermann, Mélas, Haddick, Kaim, Ott, Elsnitz, and Zach. } officers of the armies fighting against France.

George III., King of England.

Lord Grenville.

LORD WHITWORTH, English ambassador at Petersburg.
PAUL, Czar of Russia.
COMTE DE PROVENCE, afterwards Louis XVIII.
GEORGES CADOUDAL, General-in-Chief of the Royalist army of Bretagne.

Chouans serving under Georges Cadoudal:
- CŒUR-DE-ROI,
- BRANCHE D'OR,
- BRISE-BLEU,
- CHANTE-EN-HIVER,
- MONTE À L'ASSAUT,
- FEND L'AIR,
- LA GIBERNE,
- SABRE-TOUT,
- FLEUR D'ÉPINE,
- MOUSTACHE,

Royalists:
- ALFRED DE BARJOLS,
- ABBÉ DE RIANS,
- JOSEPH CADOUDAL,
- LAHAYE SAINT-HILAIRE,
- CADENETTE, a hair-dresser.
- MM. POULPIQUEZ, BURBAN-MALABRY, BONFILS, DAMPHERNE, DUCHAYLA; DUPARC, LA ROCHE, PURSAYE, TIFFANGES, and SAINT AMAND,

officers commanding adherents of the Bourbons:
- MM. DE CHARDOU, TEYSONNET, ESCARBOVILLE, ACHILLE LEBLOND, D'AUTICHAMP, SUZANNET, GRIGNON, FROTTÉ, CHÂTILLON, BOURMONT,

BARON DE SAINTE-HERMINE, passing under the name of Morgan, chief of the companions of Jehu.

companions of Jehu:
- COMTE DE JAHIAT, styling himself Montbar,
- VICOMTE DE VALENSOLLE, otherwise called Adler,
- MARQUIS DE RIBIER, known as D'Assas,
- HASTIER, passing under the name of Lecoq,
- RENARD,
- L'HIRONDELLE,
- AMIET,
- LAURENT,

MARQUIS TIBURCE VALENCE, Governor of the Paris Military School.
VALENCE, his nephew.
AUDREIN, Bishop of Vannes.

VENTURA, an interpreter.
DJEZZAR PACHA, commanding Saint-Jean d'Acre.
THE PRESIDENT OF THE COURT AT BOURG.
TALMA, an actor.
CITIZEN LECOMTE, architect of the Tuileries.
JEAN PICOT, a wine merchant.
M. FÉRAUD, a watchmaker.
JEROME, conductor of a *diligence*.
ANTOINE, a postilion.
COURTOIS, a jailer at Bourg.
DR. MILLIET, a Bourg physician.
PIERRE MAREY, PATAUT, CLAUD PHILIPPON, } Bourg peasants.
MICHEL, a gardener in the service of Madame de Montrevel.
JACQUES, his son.
CHARLOTTE, Amélie's maid.
JAMES, confidential servant of Sir John Tanlay.

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Drawn by F. T. Merrill.

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A WORD TO THE READER.

IT is about a year since my old friend, Jules Simon, the author of "Devoir," came to ask me to write a story for the "Journal pour Tous." I described a subject that I had in my head; it suited him, and we signed the agreement then and there. The scene was laid from 1791 to 1793, and the first chapter opened at Varennes, on the evening of the arrest of the king.

Although the "Journal pour Tous" was in haste, I asked him for a fortnight before I should begin my story. I wanted to go to Varennes. I did not know Varennes.

There is one thing that I cannot do, and that is, write a book or a drama upon localities that I have never seen. Before writing "Christine," I went to Fontainebleau; for "Henry III.," I went to Blois; for the "Mousquetaires," I went to Bologne and Béthune; for "Monte Cristo," I went to the Catalans and to the Château d'If; for "Isaac Laquedem," I went to Rome; and I have lost more time in studying Jerusalem and Corinth at a distance than if I had gone there.

This gives such a character of truth to what I write, that the people whom I create appear to belong in the places where I have put them; so much so, that they actually seem to have existed. There are even people who have known them.

I will tell you something in confidence, dear readers; only do not repeat it. I don't want to harm those honest men who live by this little industry; but if you go to Marseilles they will show you Morel's house on the Cours, Mercedes' house at the Catalans, and the cells of Dantes and Faria at the Château d'If. When I put "Monte Cristo" upon the boards at the Théâtre Historique, I wrote to Marseilles for them to make me a picture of the Château d'If, and send it to me. This drawing was destined for the scene-painter. The artist to whom I applied sent me the required drawing, only he did better than I had dared to ask. He wrote under the drawing: "A view of the Château d'If, at the place where Dantes was thrown over the cliff." I have since learned that the worthy guide attached to the Château d'If sold pens which were made by the Abbé Faria himself.

There is only one objection to all this, — and that is that Dantes and the Abbé Faria never existed except in my imagination; and that consequently Dantes could not have been thrown from the Château d'If, nor could the Abbé Faria have made pens. But this is what comes of visiting localities.

I desired therefore to visit Varennes before beginning my story, the first chapter of which was to be laid there. And then, historically, Varennes puzzled me. The more I read of the historical relations of Varennes the less I understood, geographically, of the arrest of the king. I proposed therefore to my young friend Paul Bocage to come with me. I was sure that he would accept. To propose such a trip to him was to make him leap from his chair to the railroad.

We took the train for Châlons. At Châlons we bargained with a man who, for five francs a day, let us have a horse and carriage. We were seven days on the way, — three

days going from Châlons to Varennes, three days returning from Varennes to Châlons, and one day making our local researches in the town.

I found, with a satisfaction which you can easily understand, that not one historian had been historical; and, with still greater satisfaction, that M. Thiers had been less historical than all the rest. I had suspected this, but I had not been sure of it. The only one who had been exact, absolutely so, was Victor Hugo, in his book entitled "The Rhine." It is true that Victor Hugo is a poet and not a historian. What historians these poets would make, if they would only consent to it!

One day Lamartine asked me to what I attributed the immense success of his "Histoire des Girondins." I replied: "To the fact that you rose to the height of a romance." He listened thoughtfully, and ended by being of my opinion.

I stayed, then, one day at Varennes, and visited all the localities necessary for my romance, which was to be entitled "René d'Argonne." Then I returned.

My son was in the country at Sainte-Assise, near Mélun; my room was waiting for me, and I resolved to go there and write my story. I do not know two characters more opposite than those of my son and myself, nor yet two which agree better together. We have certainly some good hours away from each other, but we never have better ones than when we are together.

Well, for three or four days I sat there, trying to begin my "René d'Argonne," taking up my pen and putting it down again. I could not do it.

I consoled myself by telling stories. By chance I told one which had been related to me by Nodier. It was that of four young men belonging to the Company of Jehu, who had been executed at Bourg, in Bresse, under the

most highly dramatic circumstances. One of these young men was only nineteen and a half years old.

Alexandre listened to my story attentively. Then when I had finished, he said, —

"Do you know what I would do in your place?"

"What?"

"I would let 'René d'Argonne' go, and I would write 'The Companions of Jehu' in its place."

"But just think! I have had the other story in my mind for a year or two, and it is almost done."

"It will never be done, since it is not done yet."

"Perhaps you are right, but I should lose six months in getting to where I am with that."

"Oh, in three days you will have written half a volume."

"Then you will help me?"

"Yes, I will give you two characters."

"Is that all?"

"You are too exacting; the rest is your affair. I am doing my 'Question d'Argent.'"

"Well, what are your two characters?"

"An English gentleman and a French captain."

"Let's hear about the Englishman first."

"Very well."

And Alexandre drew the portrait of Lord Tanlay for me.

"Your English gentleman suits me very well," I said; "now let's hear about your French captain."

"My French captain is a mysterious personage, who tries by every means to get himself killed, and does not succeed; and each time he makes the attempt he accomplishes some deed of bravery which wins promotion for him."

"But why does he try to get killed?"

"Because he is disgusted with life."

"And why is he disgusted with life?"

"Ah, that is the secret of the book."

"But it will have to be told."

"If I were in your place I would not tell it."

"The readers will demand it."

"You have only to reply to them that they must look for it. Something must be left to their imagination."

"My dear boy, I should be overwhelmed with letters."

"You need not answer them."

"Yes; but at least for my own satisfaction I must know why my hero wants to die."

"Oh, I will not refuse to tell you."

"Very well."

"Well, suppose that instead of being a professor of logic, Abeilard had been a soldier."

"Well?"

"Well, suppose a bullet —"

"Very good!"

"You understand! Instead of retiring to Paraclete, he would have done everything in his power to get himself killed."

"Hum!"

"Well?"

"That is rather hard."

"What do you mean?"

"Hard to make the public swallow."

"But you won't tell the public."

"That is a fact! Upon my word, I don't know but you are right."

"Certainly I am."

"Wait!"

"I am waiting."

"Have you Nodier's 'Souvenirs of the Revolution'?"

"I have the whole of Nodier."

"Go and look in the 'Souvenirs of the Revolution.' I

believe he has one or two pages on Guyon, Leprêtre, Amiet, and Hyvert."

"You will be accused of having plagiarized Nodier."

"Oh, he liked me well enough when he was living to give me what I want now. Go and look for his 'Souvenirs of the Revolution'!"

Alexandre went and brought it to me. I opened the book, turned over three or four pages, and finally found what I was looking for. A little of Nodier, dear reader, will do you no harm. This is what he says: —

"The robbers of diligences, of whom I just spoke in the article on Amiet, were called Leprêtre, Hyvert, Guyon, and Amiet.

"Leprêtre was forty-eight years old; he was a captain of dragoons and a Chevalier of St. Louis. He had a noble face, a fine figure, and great elegance of manners.

"Guyon and Amiet were never known under their true names. These were the ones written on their passports. Imagine two hair-brained fellows between twenty and thirty years of age, bound together by some common responsibility, which might have been either a good or bad action, or by a still more delicate and generous interest, — the fear of compromising their family name, — and you will recognize Guyon and Amiet as I remember them. The latter had a sinister face, and perhaps the bad reputation which biographers have given him is owing to this fact.

"Hyvert was the son of a rich merchant of Lyons, who offered sixty thousand francs to the officer in charge of him if he would allow him to escape. He was at once the Achilles and the Paris of the band. His figure was slender, but well made and graceful; his eye was always animated, and his mouth smiling. He had one of those faces that cannot be forgotten, composed as they are of an indescribable mixture of gentleness and strength, of tenderness and energy. When he gave himself up to the eloquent petulance of his inspirations, he rose to the height of enthusiasm. His conversation showed

the foundation of a good education, and much natural wit; but he had an expression of gayety which contrasted horribly with his position. For the rest, he was good, generous, humane, and tender always of the weak, although he liked to display his athletic strength, which his rather feminine features were far from indicating. He prided himself upon having never wanted for money, and upon never having had an enemy. This was his only reply to the accusation of theft and assassination. He was twenty-two years old.

"These four men had been accused of having attacked a diligence which was carrying forty thousand francs of government money. The operation was executed in broad daylight, and with the greatest friendliness. The travellers, who had no interest in the matter, concerned themselves very little about it.

"Upon this particular day a boy ten years old, wonderfully brave, seized the conductor's pistol, and fired into the midst of the assailants. As the peaceful weapon was loaded only with powder, no one was wounded; but among the passengers there was great fear of retaliation. The little boy's mother was seized with such a dreadful attack of hysterics that it absorbed the attention of all, and particularly that of the brigands. One of them hastened to her, reassuring her in the most affectionate manner, congratulating her upon the precocious courage of her son, and lavishing upon her the salts and perfumes with which these gentlemen were usually provided for their own use. She finally came to herself, and her travelling companions noticed that in the commotion the robber's mask had fallen off, but they did not see his face.

"The police of the time were not powerful, and could not oppose the operations of the bandits to any extent; but they succeeded in getting upon their track and arresting them. Leprêtre, Hyvert, Guyon, and Amiet were brought before the tribunal of a neighboring department. No one had suffered by their attempt except the public treasury, in which no one was interested, because no one knew to whom it belonged. They could not be recognized except by the beautiful lady, who took care not to do it. They were unanimously acquitted.

"However, public opinion was so manifest and so pro-

nounced that the public minister was obliged to appeal from the judgment. It was set aside; but such was then the uncertainty of the reigning power that they feared to offend those who might on the next day be possessed of power themselves. The accused were sent before the tribunal of Ain, in the city of Bourg, where their friends, relatives, and accomplices were. They thought they would satisfy one party by bringing back the victims, and they were certain not to displease the other by giving them almost infallible assurances of safety. Their entrance into the prisons was, in fact, a sort of triumphal march.

"The trial recommenced. At first it had the same results as the preceding one. The four accused men were furnished with a false alibi, — which was, however, signed by a hundred names, and for which they would have had no difficulty in finding ten thousand. All moral convictions fell before the presence of such an authority. Their acquittal seemed certain, until a question from the president changed the aspect of the trial.

"'Madame,' said he to the lady who had been so kindly assisted by one of the bandits, 'which one of the accused cared for you so well?'

"This unexpected form of interrogation confused her ideas. It is probable that her thoughts admitted the fact as recognized, and that she saw in the question only a means of softening the fate of the man who so interested her. 'It was that gentleman,' she said, indicating Leprêtre.

"The four accused, who had just established their alibi, fell under the ban of condemnation by this fact alone. They rose and bowed to her, smiling. 'There,' said Hyvert, sinking back upon his seat with a burst of laughter, 'there, Captain, that will teach you to be gallant!'

"I have heard that this unhappy lady died of grief a short time afterward.

"There was the customary appeal, but this time it gave little hope. The Revolutionary party, which Napoleon was to crush a month later, had regained the ascendency. Those of the opposite party were compromised by odious excesses. It was necessary to make some example, and they accordingly

took advantage of this opportunity, as is the custom in difficult times; for it is with governments as with men, — the weakest are the most cruel. Besides, the company of Jehu had no longer a compact existence. The heroes of this ferocious band, Debeauce, Hastier, Bary, LeCoq, Dabri, Delboulbe, and Storkenfeld, had fallen upon the scaffold or elsewhere. There was no help for the condemned ones in the enterprising courage of these men, who were not even capable henceforth of defending their own lives, and who died in cold blood, like Piard, at the end of a banquet, to spare justice or vengeance the trouble of killing them.

"Our bandits had to die; their appeal was rejected. But the judicial authority was not the first to be apprised of the fact; three shots beneath the prison walls warned the condemned ones. The commissary of the executive Directory, who took the place of the public minister at the tribunals, alarmed at this indication of connivance, asked for an armed force, of which my uncle was then the chief. At six o'clock in the morning sixty armed men were drawn up before the gate of the prison yard.

"Although the turnkeys had taken every possible precaution to prevent any one from entering the cell of the four unfortunate men, whom they had left on the previous night carefully bound and loaded with heavy irons, the prisoners on the following morning were free, and armed to the teeth. They went out without difficulty, after having shut up their keepers under locks and bolts; and being provided with all the keys, they quickly crossed the space which separated them from the prison yard. The sight of them must have been startling to the people who were waiting before the gates. To give perfect liberty to their movements, and perhaps to affect a security still more menacing than the reputation for strength and intrepidity which attached to their name, — perhaps even to disguise the flow of blood which could be seen so easily upon white linen, and which would betray the last efforts of a man wounded to the death, — they came forth naked to the waist. With their suspenders crossed over their breasts, their large belts bristling with weapons, and their cry of assault and fury,

there must have been something horribly fantastic about their appearance.

"When they reached the yard, they saw the soldiers drawn up, motionless, in a line which it was impossible to break through. They stopped for a moment and appeared to confer among themselves. Then Leprêtre, who was, as we have said, the eldest and their chief, saluted the crowd with his hand, saying, with a noble grace peculiar to himself, 'Very well, gentlemen of the guard.' Then he stepped in front of his comrades, addressed a quick and final adieu to them, and blew out his brains. Guyon, Amiet, and Hyvert stood upon the defensive, with the muzzles of their pistols turned upon the armed force.

"They did not shoot, but the soldiers regarded this as a demonstration of hostility, and fired. Guyon fell dead upon the body of Leprêtre, who had not stirred, and Amiet had his thigh broken near the groin. The 'Biographie des Contemporains' says that he was executed, but I have heard it repeatedly told that he died at the foot of the scaffold.

"Hyvert remained alone. His determined countenance; his terrible eye; his pistols moving quickly in his hands and threatening death to the spectators; a certain admiration which was attached to the despair of a beautiful young man with floating hair, who had never been known to destroy humanity, and yet of whom justice demanded an expiation of blood; the sight of those three corpses, over which he bounded like a wolf pursued by the hunters; the frightful novelty of the spectacle, — all this suspended for a moment the fury of the guards. Perceiving it, he took advantage of it. 'Gentlemen,' he said, 'I die willingly; but if any one comes near me I will kill him, even if it should be that man himself,' pointing to the executioner. 'This is my own affair, and I want no interference.' They gave him his wish, for there was no one there who was not horrified at the tragedy and did not desire its end.

"When Hyvert saw that he had gained his point, he took one of his pistols in his teeth, drew a dagger from his belt, and plunged it into his breast up to the hilt. He remained upright,

apparently astonished to find that he was still alive. They attempted to approach him. 'Take care, gentlemen!' he cried, pointing again towards the advancing men the pistols which he had seized, as the blood spurted from the wound, where the dagger still remained. 'You know our agreement. I will die alone, or I will kill others. Let us go.'

"They did not interfere with him, and he went straight to the guillotine, turning the knife around in his bosom. 'I think,' said he to the executioner, 'that my soul must be fastened into my body! I cannot die. Try and get it out for me.' A moment afterward his head fell. Whether by chance, or by some phenomenon peculiar to vitality, it bounded up and rolled away from the instrument of torture; and they will still tell you at Bourg that the head of Hyvert spoke."

I had not finished reading before I had decided to leave "René d'Argonne" for the "Companions of Jehu." The next day I came down with a satchel under my arm.

"Are you going away?" asked Alexandre.

"Yes."

"Where are you going?"

"To Bourg, in Bresse."

"What are you going to do?"

"Visit localities, and consult the memories of the people who saw Leprêtre, Amiet, Guyon, and Hyvert executed."

There are two roads to Bourg, coming from Paris. One can leave the railway at Macon and take the diligence which goes from Macon to Bourg, or one can go on as far as Lyons, and take the railway from there. I hesitated between these two roads, and was decided by one of the travellers who happened to be in the same carriage with me. He was going to Bourg, where, as he told me, he had frequent business. He was going by way of Lyons, there-

fore that was the better route. I resolved to do the same.

I slept in Lyons, and the next day at ten o'clock I was in Bourg. I found there a Lyons newspaper, containing a sarcastic article about me. Lyons has never pardoned me since in 1833, twenty-four years ago, I said that it was not literary; but, alas! at this date, 1857, I have the same opinion of Lyons that I had in 1833. I do not change my opinions easily.

There is another city in France which has almost as much of a grudge against me as Lyons, and that is Rouen. Rouen has hissed all my pieces, even "Count Hermann." One day a Neapolitan boasted to me that he had hissed Rossini and Malibran in the "Barbier" and "Desdemona." I replied: "That must be true, for Rossini and Malibran have boasted of having been hissed by the Neapolitans." I boast, therefore, of having been hissed by the people of Rouen.

However, one day when I had a native of Rouen with me, I resolved to find out why they hissed me. I like to know all these little things. He replied: "We hissed you because we don't like you." Well, Rouen did not like Joan of Arc. However, it could not have been for the same motive.

I asked the man of Rouen why he and his compatriots did not like me. I had never said anything bad about them; I had respected M. Barbet all the time that he had been mayor; and when I had been sent as a delegate from the Society of Men of Letters at the inauguration of the statue of the great Corneille, I was the only one who had thought to bow before making my speech. It seemed to me there was no reason at all why the people of Rouen should hate me. Therefore to the reply, "We hissed you because we don't like you," I humbly asked, —

"And why do you not like me?"

"Oh, you know well enough," he replied.

"I?" I asked.

"Yes, you."

"Never mind; pretend I do not."

"You remember the dinner which the town gave you at the time of Corneille's statue?"

"Perfectly; does it dislike me for not having paid for it?"

"No, it is not that."

"What is it?"

"While at this dinner, they said to you: 'Monsieur Dumas, you ought to write a play for the city of Rouen, upon a subject taken from its history.'"

"And I replied: 'Nothing more easy. I will come at your first summons, and stay a fortnight in Rouen. You will give me a subject, and during that fortnight I will write a play, the proceeds of which will be for the poor.'"

"That is true, you said so."

"I do not see any insult in that for the people of Rouen."

"Oh, but they added: 'Will you do it in prose?' To which you replied — do you remember what you replied?"

"No, indeed."

"You replied: 'I will do it in verse. I can do it more quickly.'"

"Very likely I did."

"Well!"

"What of it?"

"It is an insult for Corneille, Monsieur Dumas. That is why the people of Rouen do not like you, and have not liked you for a long time."

Word for word! O worthy people of Rouen! I hope

you will never do me the ill turn to pardon and applaud me!

The "Journal" said that M. Dumas had stayed only one night in Lyons, doubtless because a place which cared so little for literature was not worthy of keeping him any longer. M. Dumas had not thought anything about it. He had stayed only one night in Lyons because he was in a hurry to get to Bourg; and when he arrived there he went straight to the "Journal" office of the department. He knew that it was directed by a distinguished archeologist, the editor of the work by my friend Baux on the church of Brou. I sent for M. Milliet. He hastened to me. We shook hands, and I told him the object of my journey.

"I can help you," he said to me. "I will take you to a magistrate here, who is writing the history of the province."

"How far has he got?"

"As far as 1822."

"That is all right, then; as the events which I wish to relate date from 1799, and as my heroes were executed in 1800, he will have gone past that date, and can give me my information. Let us come to your magistrate."

On the way M. Milliet told me that this same magistrate and historian was a connoisseur in wines. We were taken to his private office. I found him a man with a ruddy face and a cheerful smile. He welcomed me with that protecting air which historians reserve for poets.

"Well, sir," he said, "so you are coming to look for a subject for a story in our poor country?"

"No, sir; my subject is already selected. I have only come to get historical facts."

"Oh, I did not suppose romance writers needed to take so much trouble!"

"You are wrong, sir, at least so far as I am concerned. I am in the habit of making serious researches when treating of historical subjects."

"You could have sent some one else."

"Any one whom I could have sent, sir, would not have been penetrated with my subject, and might have overlooked important facts. Besides, I am aided very much by localities, and I cannot describe them without having seen them."

"Then this is a story which you are going to write yourself?"

"Eh? Yes, sir. I had the last one done by my valet; but as it was very successful, the rogue asked such exorbitant wages that to my great regret I was not able to keep him."

The magistrate bit his lips; then, after a moment of silence he said: "Be good enough to tell me, sir, in what way I can aid you in this important work."

"You can direct my researches, sir. Having made a history of the department, none of the important facts which took place in its principal town can be unknown to you."

"Well, sir, I think that in this particular instance I am very well informed."

"Well, to begin. Your department was the centre of the operations of the companions of Jehu."

"I have heard of the companions of Jesus," replied the magistrate, recovering his beaming smile.

"You mean the Jesuits, do you not? That is not what I am looking for, sir."

"Neither is it that of which I am speaking. I refer to those robbers of diligences who infested the roads from 1797 to 1800."

"Well, sir, permit me to say to you that those very

people are the ones for information of whom I have come to Bourg, and that they called themselves companions of Jehu, and not companions of Jesus."

"But what does this title, 'Companions of Jehu,' mean? I would like to understand it."

"I like to understand things also. That is why I did not wish to confound the highway robbers with the apostles."

"That certainly would not have been very orthodox."

"That is what you, however, would have done, sir, if I, a poet, had not come to correct your judgment as a historian."

"I am waiting for your explanation, sir," said the magistrate, compressing his lips.

"It will be short and simple. Jehu was a king of Israel, consecrated by Elisha for the extermination of the House of Ahab. Elisha was Louis XVIII., Jehu was Cadoudal, and the House of Ahab was the Revolution. That is why the robbers of diligences who stole government money to carry on the war of la Vendée called themselves companions of Jehu."

"Sir, I am happy to learn something at my age."

"Oh, one is always learning at all times and all ages. During this life one learns men, and after death one learns God."

"But," he returned, with a movement of impatience, "may I know in what way I can serve you?"

"In this way, sir. Four of these young men, the principal ones among the companions of Jehu, were executed at Bourg, on the Place du Bastion."

"In the first place, sir, at Bourg they do not execute on the Place du Bastion; the executions take place in the Market Field."

"Yes, within the last fifteen or twenty years that is

true; but formerly, and particularly at the time of the Revolution, they took place as I have said."

"It is possible."

"It is true. These four young men were named Guyon, Leprêtre, Amiet, and Hyvert."

"That is the first time I ever heard those names."

"They are, however, not without a certain renown, particularly in Bourg."

"And are you sure, sir, that these people were executed here?"

"I am sure of it."

"Where did you get your information?"

"From a man whose uncle commanded the armed police, and was present at the execution."

"Can you name this man?"

"Charles Nodier."

"What! the romance writer, the poet?"

"If he were a historian I should not be so sure of his facts, sir. I have lately learned, on a trip to Varennes, what to think of historians; but just because he is a poet and a romance writer, I do not hesitate to believe him."

"That is as you please; but I do not as yet know what you desire to find out, and I dare say that if you came to Bourg only to get information about the execution of these gentlemen — what do you call them?"

"Guyon, Leprêtre, Amiet, and Hyvert."

"— that you have had your trouble for nothing. For twenty years, sir, I have been compiling the archives of this town, and I have never seen such a thing mentioned."

"The archives of the town are not those of the registrar's office. Perhaps in these latter I can find what I seek."

"Ah, sir, if you find anything in the archives of the registrar's office you will be very keen. It is chaos, sir!

veritable chaos! You will have to stay here a month, and then—"

"I intend to stay here only one day, sir; but if in that day I find what I want, will you permit me to share it with you?"

"Yes, sir! yes, sir! yes! And you will do me a great service."

"No greater than that which I have just asked of you. I will tell you something that you did not know,—that is all."

You may imagine that when I came away from my magistrate's my pride was piqued, and I was determined at all costs to get some information about the companions of Jehu. I went again to Milliet.

"Listen," he said; "I have a brother-in-law who is an advocate."

"That is the man for me. Let us go to the brother-in-law."

"He is at the Palace now."

"Then let us go to the Palace."

"Your presence there will be commented upon."

"Then go there yourself, alone, and tell him what I want. Let him make his researches; and I at the same time will go and look about the town and get an idea of the localities. We will meet at four o'clock, on the Place du Bastion, if you like."

"Very well."

"It seems to me that I saw a forest when I was on the way here."

"The forest of Seillon."

"Bravo!"

"Do you need a forest?"

"I must have one."

"Then allow me — "

"What ? "

"I am going to take you to one of my friends, M. Leduc, a poet, who at odd moments is an inspector."

"An inspector of what ? "

"Of the forest."

"I suppose there are no ruins in the forest ? "

"There is the Chartreuse monastery, which is not in the forest, but which is only a hundred feet from it."

"And in the forest ? "

"There is a sort of building called the Correrie, which belongs to the monastery, and which communicates with it by a subterranean passage."

"Good ! Now if you could only offer me a cave, you would fill my cup to the brim."

"We have the cave of Ceyzeriat, but it is on the other side of the Reyssouse."

"Never mind ; if the cave will not come to me, I, like Mahomet, must go to the cave. In the mean time, let us go and see M. Leduc."

Five minutes afterward we were with M. Leduc, who, when he learned my errand, put himself and his horse and carriage at my disposal. I accepted them all. There are some men who offer things in such a way that they put you at ease at once.

We visited the monastery first. If it had been built expressly for me, it could not have suited me better. The cloister was deserted and the garden gone to waste. Thanks, Chance ! From there we went to the Correrie. It was in the same condition as the monastery. I did not know yet what I should do with it, but it was evident that I could make it useful.

"Now, sir," I said to my obliging guide, "I want a pretty situation, rather gloomy, under tall trees, near the river. Have you got such a thing around here ? "

"What do you want to do with it?"

"I want to build a château on it."

"What château?"

"A castle in the air. I want a place to put a family, —a model mother, a melancholy young girl, a lively brother, and a poaching gardener."

"We have a place called Noires Fontaines."

"That is a charming name, to begin with."

"But there is no château on it."

"So much the better, for I should have been obliged to tear it down."

"Would you like to go there?"

We started, and a quarter of an hour afterwards we arrived at the guard-house.

"Let us take this little path," said M. Leduc to me. "It will take us where you want to go."

It did, in fact, conduct us to a place filled with tall trees, which shaded three or four springs.

"This is what they call Noires Fontaines," said M. Leduc to me.

"This is the place where Mme. de Montrevel, Amélie, and little Edward will live. And now what are those villages over there?"

"The nearest one is Montagnac. Yonder in the mountain is Ceyzeriat."

"Is that where the cave is?"

"Yes. How did you know there was one?"

"Oh, I heard of it; and now give me the names of those other villages, if you please."

"Saint-Just, Tréconnas, Ramasse, and Villereversure."

"Very well."

"Is that enough?"

"Yes."

I took out my memorandum book, made a plan of the

localities, and wrote down as nearly as I could in their proper places the names of the villages which M. Leduc had just told me.

"That is done," I said.

"Now where are we going?"

"Is the Church of Brou on our way?"

"Exactly."

"Let us visit the Church of Brou."

"Do you want that also in your story?"

"Certainly. Do you suppose I would put the scene of my story in a country which possesses one of the most beautiful pieces of architecture of the sixteenth century without utilizing it?"

"Then come to the Church of Brou."

A quarter of an hour afterwards the sacristan opened for us this grand jewel-box, which contains the three marble jewels called the tombs of Marguerite of Austria, of Marguerite de Bourbon, and of Philibert le Beau.

"How did it happen," I asked, "that all these masterpieces were not levelled with the dust at the time of the Revolution?"

"Ah, sir," replied the sacristan, "the government had an idea."

"What was it?"

"It was to make the church a storehouse for fodder."

"And so the hay saved the marble? You are right, my friend, — that was an idea."

"Does that idea give you one?" asked M. Leduc.

"Yes, indeed; it will go hard with me if I cannot make something out of it." I drew out my watch. "Three o'clock; let us go to the prison. I must meet M. Milliet at four o'clock, on the Place du Bastion."

"Wait! one more thing."

"What is it?"

"Have you seen the motto of Marguerite of Austria?"

"No; where is it?"

"Here on her tomb."

"'Fortune, infortune, fort'une'?"

"Exactly."

"Well, what does that play upon words mean?"

"Learned men explain it thus: 'Destiny persecutes a woman.'"

"Let us see."

"In the first place you must suppose the motto to have been Latin originally."

"Yes, it probably was."

"Well; 'Fortuna infortunat'—"

"Oh, oh! 'infortunat'!"

"Well?"

"That looks like a barbarism."

"What will you have?"

"An explanation."

"Give it."

"Here it is: 'Fortuna, infortuna, forti una,—Fortune and misfortune are alike to the strong.'"

"Do you know, that may possibly be the true translation!"

"That is what comes of not being a scholar, my dear friend. With common-sense one can often see more correctly than with science. You have nothing else to tell me?"

"No."

"Then let us come to the prison."

We got into the carriage again, went back to the city, and stopped at the prison door. I put my head out of the window.

"Ah," I said, "they have spoiled it for me!"

"What! they have spoiled it for you?"

"Certainly; it was not like this in the time of my prisoners. Can we speak to the jailer?"

"Certainly."

"Let us do so, then."

We knocked at the gate, and a man about forty years old came and opened it for us. He recognized M. Leduc.

"My man," said M. Leduc, "here is one of my learned friends — "

"Come, now," I said, interrupting him, "no poor jokes, if you please."

"— who pretends," continued M. Leduc, "that the prison is no longer as it was in the last century."

"That is true, M. Leduc. It was torn down and rebuilt in 1816."

"Then the inside arrangements are not the same?"

"Oh, no, sir! everything has been changed!"

"Is there a plan of the old building?"

"Well, perhaps M. Martin, the architect, can find one for us."

"Is he a relative of M. Martin the lawyer?"

"He is his brother."

"Very well; then I will get my plan."

"Then there is no need of staying here?" asked M. Leduc.

"None at all."

"I can go home again?"

"Except for the sorrow of parting with you, there is nothing to prevent."

"You can find your way to the Place du Bastion without me?"

"Yes; it is only a few steps from here."

"What are you going to do with your evening?"

"I will come and spend it with you, if you like."

"Very well! at nine o'clock a cup of tea will be waiting for you."

"I will come and take it."

I thanked M. Leduc, and we shook hands and parted. I went down through the Rue des Lisses (or Lices, meaning arena, because of a tournament which must have taken place on the square to which it leads), and going past the garden of Montburon I found myself at the Place du Bastion. It is a semi-circle, on which the town markets are held at the present day. In the midst of the circle rises the statue of Bichat by David (d'Angers), — Bichat in a frock coat (why this exaggeration of realism?), standing with one hand on the heart of a naked child of nine or ten years (why this excess of idealism), while at Bichat's feet is extended a corpse. It is Bichat's book, "Life and Death," translated into bronze.

I was looking at the statue, which contains both the excellences and the defects of David, when I felt some one touch me on the shoulder. It was M. Milliet. He held a paper in his hand.

"Well?" I said.

"Well?"

"What have you there?"

"The report of the execution."

"Of whom?"

"Of your men."

"Of Guyon, Leprêtre, Amiet, and Hyvert?"

"Yes."

"Give it to me."

"Here it is."

I took it and read: —

Official Report of the Death and Execution of Laurent Guyon, Etienne Hyvert, François Amiet, and Antoine Leprêtre. Condemned on the 20th Thermidor, in the year VIII., and executed on the 23d Vendémiaire, in the year IX.

On this day, the 23d Vendémiaire, in the year IX., the government commissioner at the tribunal, who received, at eleven

o'clock in the evening, a packet from the minister of justice, containing the suit and judgment which condemned to death Laurent Guyon, Etienne Hyvert, François Amiet, and Antoine Leprêtre, — being the judgment of the Court of Appeal of the 6th, which rejected the appeal against the judgment of the 21st Thermidor, in the year VIII., — gave notice, by letter, between seven and eight o'clock in the morning, to the four accused men that their death sentence would be executed to-day at eleven o'clock.

In the interval before eleven o'clock these four men shot themselves with pistols and stabbed themselves with daggers, in the prison. Leprêtre and Guyon, according to public report, were dead; Hyvert mortally wounded and expiring; and Amiet mortally wounded, but preserving consciousness. All four, in this state, were conducted to the guillotine, and dead or alive, were guillotined.

At half-past eleven, officer Colin sent the report of their execution to the municipal records, to have it written upon the book of the dead. The captain of police sent to the justice of the peace the report of what passed in the prison, where he was present.

I was not there, but I certify to what public report has told me.

Bourg, 23d Vendémiaire, in the year IX.

(Signed)

Dubost, *Clerk.*

Ah, so the poet was more correct than the historian! The captain of police, who sent to the justice of the peace the report of what had passed in prison, *where he had been present*, was Nodier's uncle. This report sent to the justice of the peace was the story which was engraved upon the mind of the young man, — a story which after forty years saw the light again, without alteration, in his masterpiece entitled "Souvenirs of the Revolution." The whole account of the matter was in the archives of the registrar's office. M. Martin had offered to have it copied

for me. I had in my pocket Nodier's "Souvenirs of the Revolution." I held in my hand the official report of the execution, which confirmed the facts advanced by him.

"Now let us go and see our magistrate," I said to M. Milliet.

"Now let us go and see our magistrate," he repeated.

The magistrate had not a word to say for himself; and I left him convinced that poets knew history as well as historians, if not better.

ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

PROLOGUE.

THE CITY OF AVIGNON.

WE are not sure that the prologue which we are about to submit to our readers is at all necessary, but we cannot resist the desire to make it the preface of this book.

The further we advance in life and in art, the more convinced we become that nothing is abrupt and isolated; that Nature and society are formed by natural causes and not by accidents; and that the flower, whether bright or sad, perfumed or obnoxious, which opens to-day before our eyes, had its bud in the past and its root in days before our own, as it will have its fruit in the future. When a man is young, he takes things as they come; he is joyous, careless, unconcerned about what is coming next. Youth is the springtime of life, with its fresh mornings and beautiful evenings. If a storm sometimes passes over the sky, it bursts and vanishes, leaving the heavens bluer, the atmosphere purer, and Nature more smiling than before. What is the use of reflecting upon the cause of this storm, which is as swift as a caprice, as ephemeral as a fancy? Before we have guessed the meteorological enigma, the storm will have passed. But it is different with those terrible phenomena which towards the end of summer menace our harvests, or in the middle of autumn beat down our vintage. One asks whence they came, where they are going; one tries to foresee them.

Now, for the thinker, the historian, and the poet there is quite another subject for revery in revolutions, — those tempests of the social atmosphere which cover the earth with blood, and cut down a whole generation of men. The storms of Nature, while they beat down a harvest or shatter a vineyard, destroy the hope of only one year, which can be largely repaired in the next.

Thus if in my youth I had had to relate the story which I am going to tell you to-day, instead of stopping where the first scene of my book is to be laid, I should have passed over it carelessly. I should have crossed the South as if it had been any other province, and should have spoken of Avignon as of any other city. But it is not thus to-day. I live no more among the sudden storms of spring, but in the tempests of summer and autumn. To-day, when I speak of Avignon, I awake a spectre; and as Antony, displaying Cæsar's shroud, said: "Here is the rent which Casca's dagger made; here is that made by the blade of Cassius; and here the one made by the sword of Brutus," I say to myself, as I see the papal city, "Here is the blood of the Albigeois; this is the blood of the Cevennois; this the blood of the Republicans; this the blood of the Royalists; this the blood of Lescuyer, and this the blood of Marshal Brune." Thus I feel a deep sadness as I begin to write; and with the first lines I discover that if I do not take care, the graver of the historian will replace in my fingers the pen of the romance writer.

Well, let us be both. Reader, grant the first fifteen or twenty pages to the historian. The romance writer will have the rest.

Let us say, then, a few words of Avignon, the place where the first scene of this new book which we are offering to the public is laid. Perhaps before reading what we

have to say, it would be well to look at what its national historian, François Nougeuir, remarks. "Avignon," he says, "is a city which is noble by reason of its antiquity, beautiful in its situation, superb on account of its walls, cheerful by reason of the fertility of its soil, charming in the gentleness of its inhabitants, magnificent for its palaces, beautiful on account of its wide streets, marvellous by reason of the construction of its bridge, rich on account of its commerce, and known through all the land."

May the shadow of François Nouguier pardon us, if we do not see his town with his eyes! Those who have known Avignon can best judge which has seen it the more correctly, the historian or the romance writer.

It must be confessed that Avignon is unique. It is a city of extreme passions. The religious dissensions which have brought political hatred upon its head date as far back as the twelfth century. The valleys of Mont Ventoux sheltered, after his flight from Lyons, Pierre de Valdo and his Vaudois, — the ancestors of those Protestants who, under the name of Albigenses, took from the Counts of Toulouse and gave to the papacy the seven châteaux which Raymond VI. possessed in Languedoc.

Avignon, a republic governed by podestates, refused to submit to the King of France. One morning Louis VIII., who found it a more simple matter to go on a crusade against Avignon, as Simon de Montfort had done, than against Jerusalem, like Philip Augustus, — one morning, we say, Louis VIII. appeared before the gates of Avignon, demanding to enter with lances at rest, banners flying, and trumpets of war sounding. The citizens refused. As a final concession, they offered to permit a peaceable entrance, with bared heads, lances raised, and the royal flag alone flying. The king began the siege. It lasted three

months, during which, history says, the citizens of Avignon returned to the French soldiers arrow for arrow, wound for wound, and death for death.

The city finally yielded. Louis VIII. had in his army the Roman cardinal-legate Saint-Ange; it was he who dictated the conditions of the capitulation, and they were hard and absolute. The people of Avignon were compelled to tear down their ramparts, fill up their ditches, level with the ground three hundred towers, give up their ships, and burn their engines and machines of war. They were obliged, besides, to pay an enormous contribution, to abjure heresy, and to support in Palestine thirty men-at-arms, completely armed and equipped, to assist in the deliverance of the tomb of Christ; and finally, to watch over the fulfilment of these conditions, of which the order still exists in the archives of the city, there was founded a brotherhood of penitents, which, lasting for more than six centuries, has endured until our day. In addition to these penitents, who were called White Penitents, was founded the order of Black Penitents, filled with the spirit of opposition to Raymond de Toulouse. From that day, religious and political hatreds have been identical.

It was not enough for Avignon to become a land of heresy; it was to become also the theatre of schism. Perhaps we may be permitted, while we are speaking of French Rome, a short historical digression. To be sure, it is not necessary to the subject of which we are treating, and perhaps we should do better to enter at once upon our drama; but we hope to be pardoned. We write above all for those who in a story like to find something else besides the story itself.

In 1285 Philip le Bel mounted the throne. This date of 1285 is a supremely historical one. The papacy — which in the person of Gregory VII. opposed the Emperor

of Germany, and which although conquered materially by Henry IV. overcame him morally — received a slap in the face from a simple Sabine gentleman, and the iron gauntlet of Colonna reddened the face of Boniface VIII.

But what was the King of France, from whose hand the blow really came, about to gain under the successor of Boniface VIII.? This successor was Benoit XI., a man of low lineage, but who would perhaps have been a man of genius if he had been given time enough. Too weak to oppose Philip le Bel openly, he found a means which the founder of a celebrated order, two hundred years later, might have envied him. He pardoned Colonna publicly and aloud. To pardon Colonna was to declare him guilty, since the guilty alone need pardon. If Colonna were guilty, the King of France was at least his accomplice.

There was more or less danger in sustaining such an argument, and Benoit XI. was Pope only eight months. One day a veiled woman, who called herself a lay sister of Sainte Pétronille at Pérouse, came while he was at table and presented him with a basket of figs. Was an asp concealed in it, as in that of Cleopatra? The fact remains that on the following day the holy seat was vacant.

Then Philip le Bel had a strange idea, so strange that it almost amounted to an hallucination. It was to take the papacy from Rome and bring it to France, to imprison it there, and to make it coin money for his profit.

The reign of Philip le Bel was the accession of gold. Gold was the sole god of this king who had insulted a Pope. Saint Louis had had for minister a priest, the worthy Abbé Suger; but Philip le Bel had for ministers two bankers, — the Florentines Biscio and Musiato.

Do you suspect, dear reader, that we are going to fall into the common philosophical plan which consists in

anathematizing gold? You are mistaken. In the thirteenth century gold was a method of progress. Until then, men had had only land. Gold is negotiable land, — land which is movable, exchangeable, transportable, divisible, spiritualized, as it were.

It was necessary to draw the gold from the place where it was buried, — a very different place from the mines of Chili or Mexico. Gold was with the Jews, and in the churches. To take it from these mines, it needed more than a king, — it needed a Pope. And this is why Philip le Bel, the great coiner of gold, resolved to have a Pope of his own.

Benoit XI. being dead, there was a council at Pérouse; and at this council the French cardinals were in the majority. Philip le Bel had his eyes upon the archbishop of Bordeaux, Bertrand de Got. He appointed a meeting with him in a forest, near Saint-Jean d'Angely. Bertrand de Got did not fail to keep the rendezvous. The king and the archbishop held Mass there; and at the moment of the elevation of the host, they swore absolute secrecy by the God they were glorifying. Bertrand de Got was, as yet, ignorant of the matter for which they had met. When the Mass was finished, Philip le Bel said, —

"Archbishop, it is in my power to make you a Pope."

Bertrand de Got listened no further, but throwing himself at the king's feet, exclaimed, "What must I do for it?"

"Grant me six favors," replied Philip le Bel.

"It is for you to command, for me to obey," said the future Pope.

Thus the oath of bondage was taken. The king raised Bertrand de Got, kissed him upon the mouth, and said to him: —

"The six favors which I ask of you are as follows:

1. That you will reconcile me perfectly with the Church, and that you will grant me pardon for the crime that I committed concerning Boniface VIII. 2. That you will restore to me and mine the communion which the court of Rome took away from me. 3. That you will grant me the tithes of the clergy in my kingdom for five years, in order to help with the expenses of the Flemish war. 4. That you will destroy and annul the memory of Boniface VIII. 5. That you will confer the dignity of cardinal upon Jacopo and Pietro de Colonna. The sixth favor I reserve until I can speak of it at another time and place."

Bertrand de Got took oath both for the known and the unknown favors. The unknown one, of which the king had not dared to speak, was the destruction of the Templars.

Besides the promise and the oath taken upon the Corpus Domini, Bertrand de Got gave as hostage his brother and two of his nephews. The king, for his part, swore that he would have him elected Pope.

This scene took place in a clearing in the forest, in the midst of the shadows, and more nearly resembled the conjuring of a demon by a magician than an agreement between a king and a Pope.

The coronation of the king, which took place at Lyons a short time afterwards, and which was the beginning of the captivity of the Church, must have fallen under the displeasure of God. At the moment when the royal procession was passing, a wall loaded with spectators fell down, wounding the king, and killing the Duc de Bretagne. The Pope was knocked down, and his tiara rolled in the mud.

Bertrand de Got was elected Pope, under the title of Clement V. Clement V. did all that Bertrand de Got had

promised. Philip was declared innocent; the communion was restored to him and his; the purple was thrown over the shoulders of the Colonnas; the Church was obliged to pay for the wars in Flanders and the crusade of Philip de Valois against the Grecian empire; the memory of Boniface VIII. was, if not destroyed and annulled, at least dishonored; the walls of the Temple were rebuilt, and the Templars were burned upon the platform of the new bridge. All these edicts were dated from Avignon.

Philip le Bel was the richest of all the kings of the French monarchy. He had an inexhaustible treasure in his Pope: he had bought him, and he used him. He put him under pressure; and as pressure causes cider to run, so did gold run from the crushed Pope. The papacy, insulted by Colonna in the person of Boniface VIII., abdicated the empire of the world in that of Clement V.

We have told how the reigns of the king of blood and the pope of gold began. It is well known how they ended. Clement V. went first. He had seen his palace burned in a dream. "From that moment," says Baluze, "he became sad, and did not last long." Seven months afterwards it was Philip's turn. He died while hunting, overthrown by a wild boar.

The uproarious Louis X., surnamed the Headstrong, succeeded his father Philip le Bel, and John XXII. followed Clement V.

Avignon then became a second Rome, and John XXII. and Clement VI. consecrated it Queen of Luxury. The manners of the times made it the Queen of Debauchery. In place of its towers, which were levelled by Romain de Saint-Ange, Hernandez de Heredi, the grand master of Saint John of Jerusalem, built around it a girdle of walls. It had dissolute monks, who indulged in de-

bauchery and luxury; it had its beautiful courtesans, who tore the diamonds from the tiara to make bracelets and necklaces for themselves; and it had the echoes of Vaucluse, which sent to it the sweet and melodious songs of Petrarch.

This lasted until the time of King Charles V., who was a wise and religious prince, and who, having resolved to put a stop to the scandal, sent Marshal de Boucicaut to drive from Avignon the anti-pope Benoit XIII. But at sight of the soldiers of the French king the Pope remembered that before he had been Benoit XIII. he had been Captain Pierre de Luna. For five months he carried on the defence, taking aim himself from the walls of the castle, with his machines of war, which hurled another kind of thunderbolt from his pontifical edicts. At last, forced to fly, he went out of the city through a postern, after having ruined a hundred houses and killed four thousand people of Avignon. He took refuge in Spain, where the King of Arragon offered him an asylum. There, every morning, from the top of a tower, assisted by two priests whom he had associated with him, he blessed the world (which was none the better for it) and excommunicated his enemies (who were none the worse for it). At last, feeling himself about to die, and fearing lest schism should die with him, he named his two priests cardinals, — the condition being that when he was gone, one of the two should elect the other Pope.

The election was made. The new Pope followed schism for a little while, sustained by the cardinal who had elected him. Finally they both entered into a negotiation with Rome, made their apologies, and returned to help their Mother Church, — one with the title of Archbishop of Seville, the other with that of Archbishop of Toledo.

From that time until 1790, Avignon, bereaved of its Popes, had been governed by legates and vice-legates. It had had seven sovereign pontiffs, who had resided within its walls for seventy years. It had seven hospitals, seven brotherhoods of penitents, seven convents for men, seven convents for women, seven parishes, and seven cemeteries.

For those who knew Avignon, there were at this time two cities, — the one a city of priests, the Roman city; the other a city of merchants, the French city. The city of priests had its palaces, its Popes, its hundred churches, its innumerable bells, always ready to sound the tocsin for political broils or the knell for murder. The city of the merchants had its Rhone, its silk-workmen, and its cross-roads, which went from north to south, from east to west, from Lyons to Marseilles, from Nismes to Turin.

The French city was desirous of having a king, jealous of its liberties, and trembling with anger at feeling itself an enslaved land; a land of priests, with clergy for its lords, — a clergy who were not a pious clergy, austerely tolerant to duty and charity, living in the world to console and edify it, without mingling either in its joys or its passions; but a clergy such as intrigue, ambition, and cupidity had made it, — abbés of the court, rivals of Roman abbés, idle, libertine, elegant, bold, kings of the world, autocrats of the salon, kissing the hand of ladies of doubtful reputation who honored them with their friendship. Will you have a type of these abbés? Take the Abbé Maury, — proud as a duke, insolent as a lackey, the son of a shoemaker, more aristocratic than the son of a great lord.

These two classes of inhabitants represented heresy and orthodoxy. One was the French party, and the other the

Roman; one the party of absolute monarchy, the other the progressive constitutional party. The two did not tend to bring elements of peace and security into the old pontifical city. It can be easily understood, therefore, that when the Revolution broke out in Paris, and manifested itself in the taking of the Bastile, the two parties, still excited by the religious wars of Louis XIV., did not remain quiet. Avignon was a city of priests, and it was also a city of hatreds. There is no better place than a convent in which to learn hate. The heart of a child, elsewhere pure and free from bad passions, is born there full of paternal hates, bequeathed from father to son for eight hundred years, which, after a life of hate, descend in turn to the next generation.

Thus at the first cry of liberty which France uttered, the French city rose in joy and hope; the moment had come for it to contest aloud the concession made by a young minor queen — to redeem her sins — of a city, a province, and with it half a million souls. By what right had these souls been sold *in æternum* to the hardest and most exacting of all masters, — a Roman pontiff? There was to be a gathering on the Champ de Mars in the fraternal embrace of the Federation. Was not Avignon France? Deputies were appointed, who went to the legate and respectfully begged for permission to depart. They gave them twenty-four hours in which to leave the city.

During the night the papists amused themselves by hanging in effigy a mannikin wearing the tri-colored cockade. The course of the Rhone can be directed; a canal can be made for the durance; ditches can be dug for the raging torrents which come when the snow melts, precipitating liquid avalanches from the summit of Mont Ventoux, — but God himself has never yet attempted to

arrest this terrible living flood, this human torrent, which bounded over the rapid slopes of the streets of Avignon. At sight of the mannikin bearing the national colors and swinging at the end of a rope, the French city rose from its depths, uttering cries of rage. Four papists who were suspected of the sacrilege, two marquises, a citizen, and a workman were torn from their houses and hung in place of the effigy. This was on the 11th of June, 1790.

The French city as a body wrote to the National Assembly that it gave itself to France, together with its Rhone, its commerce, and its South, comprising half of Provence. The National Assembly had reached one of its periods of reaction, in which it did not care to quarrel with the Pope, and temporized with the king: it adjourned the affair. From that time Avignon was in revolt, and the Pope could do with it what the court could have done with Paris after the taking of the Bastile, if the Assembly had adjourned the proclamation of the rights of man. The Pope sent forth the order to annul all that had been done in the *Comtat Venaissin*, to re-establish the privileges of the nobles and clergy, and to bring back the Inquisition in all its severity.

The pontifical decrees were posted up about the city. One man alone, in open day, in the sight of all, dared to go straight to the wall where the decrees were posted, and tear them off. He was named Lescuyer. He was not young, and therefore he was not carried away by the fires of youth. No, he was almost an old man, who was not even in his native city; he was a Frenchman from Picardy, ardent and thoughtful at the same time; he had been a notary, and had been established at Avignon for a long time.

Then came a crime which Roman Avignon still remem-

bers, — a crime so great that the Virgin wept. For you must know that Avignon is Italy. It must have miracles at any price; and if God does not create them, some one is sure to invent them. And the credit of the miracle must belong to the Virgin. The Virgin is everything in Italy, that land of poetry. All the mind, heart, and language of the Italians is full of the word "Madonna." It was in the Church of the Cordeliers that this miracle took place. The crowd hastened there.

It was much that the Virgin should weep; but in the mean time a report gained ground which put the climax to their emotions. A tightly shut chest had been carried through the city, and it had excited the curiosity of the inhabitants. What could it contain? Two hours later report had it that not one but eighteen chests had been seen on their way to the Rhone. As for the objects which they contained, a porter revealed the secret: they were the contents of the *mont-de-piété*, or national pawn-shop, which the French party were carrying with them on their way into exile. The contents of the *mont-de-piété* were spoils taken from the poor. The more miserable is a city the richer is its *mont-de-piété;* and few of them were richer than that of Avignon.

This was no longer a matter of opinions; it was a theft, an infamous theft. Whites and Reds ran to the Church of the Cordeliers, crying that the city should answer to them for it. Lescuyer was the municipal secretary. His name was tossed to the crowd, not as having torn down the pontifical decrees, — for he would have found plenty to defend that act, — but as having signed the order to the custodian of the *mont-de-piété* to allow the property to be removed.

They sent three men to take Lescuyer and bring him to the church. They found him in the street, on his way to

the municipality. The men fell upon him and dragged him into the church with ferocious cries. When they reached it, instead of being in the house of the Lord, Lescuyer understood, by the flaming eyes fixed upon him, by the fists shaken at him in menace, and by the cries which demanded his death, that he was in one of those circles of hell unnamed by Dante. His only idea was that all this rage was on account of the mutilation of the pontifical decrees; he got up in the pulpit, and with the voice of a man who not only does not reproach himself for anything, but who is even ready to do the same thing again, he said: —

"My brothers, I have believed the Revolution to be a necessity; I have therefore done all in my power —"

The fanatics realized that if Lescuyer explained, he was saved. This was not at all what they desired, and they threw themselves upon him, tore him from the pulpit, and pushed him into the midst of the howling mob, who dragged him towards the altar, uttering that terrible cry between the hiss of the serpent and the roar of the tiger, — that murderous *Zou-zou!* peculiar to the population of Avignon.

Lescuyer knew that fatal cry; he tried to take refuge at the foot of the altar. He fell there, but he did not find it a refuge. A workman armed with a club had just hit him such a terrible blow on the head that the club broke in two. Then they threw themselves upon his poor body, and with that mingling of ferocity and gayety peculiar to the people of the South, the men began to sing and dance upon him, while the women, to punish him for his blasphemies against the Pope, cut his lips into fringes with their scissors. And then from the midst of the group came a hoarse cry, —

"In the name of Heaven! in the name of the Virgin! in the name of humanity! kill me at once!"

The cry was heard, and with one accord the assassins scattered. They left the wretch, bleeding, disfigured, and broken, to endure his agony. It lasted for five hours, during which, amid bursts of laughter, insults, and mockings from the crowd, the poor body lay palpitating upon the steps of the altar.

That is how they kill in Avignon. But, stop! they have still another fashion.

It occurred to some one to go to the *mont-de-piété* and find out the truth. Everything was in its place; not a thing had been removed. Thus it was not as an accomplice in a theft that Lescuyer had been so cruelly assassinated, but as a patriot.

There was at this time one man in Avignon who ruled the people. All these terrible leaders of the South have acquired such a fatal celebrity that it is only necessary to name them for each one to be recognized. The man of whom we speak was Jourdan. He was a braggart and a liar, and he had made the lower class of the people believe that he had cut the throat of the governor of the Bastile; therefore he was called Jourdan Cut-throat. His real name was Mathieu Jouve. He was not a native of Provence, but was from Puy-en-Velay. He had been originally a muleteer on the steep hills surrounding his native town; then a soldier, who had never seen war, and whom war would have made more human; and finally an innkeeper in Paris. At Avignon he dealt in madder.

Jourdan assembled three hundred men, seized the gates of the city, left half of his troops there, and with the rest marched upon the Church of the Cordeliers, preceded by two pieces of cannon. He drew them up before the church, and fired without taking any particular aim. The

assassins scattered like a flight of frightened birds, leaving a few dead upon the steps of the church. Jourdan and his men picked their way among the corpses and entered the holy place. No one was there except the Virgin, and the unfortunate Lescuyer, who was still alive. Jourdan and his comrades took good care not to finish Lescuyer; his agony would be a supreme means of exciting the people. They took what remained of him, for he was almost dead, and carried him away, bleeding, panting, and uttering hoarse cries. Every one fled from the sight, shutting doors and windows.

At the end of an hour, Jourdan and his three hundred men were masters of the town. Lescuyer was dead, but that did not matter; they had no further need of his sufferings.

Jourdan profited by the terror which he inspired, and arrested, or caused to be arrested, eighty-four persons as assassins of Lescuyer. Thirty or more of them had not even set foot in the church; but when one finds a good occasion for getting rid of one's enemies, one should profit by it, for good occasions are scarce. These eighty persons were thrust all together into the Trouillas tower. It was the scene of Inquisitional tortures. To this day can be seen, along the walls, the thick soot which rose with the smoke of the wood that consumed human flesh; to this day they will show you the appliances of torture which have been carefully preserved, — the copper kettle, the oven, the wooden horse, the chains, the *oubliettes*, and even the old bones; nothing is wanting.

It was in this tower, built by Clement V., that they shut up the eighty prisoners. When they had once taken them and shut them up, they did not know what else to do with them. Who would judge them? There was no legal tribunal except the tribunal of the Pope. Should

they kill the wretches as they had killed Lescuyer? As we have said, there were a third, and perhaps a half of them, who had not only taken no part in the assassination, but who had not even put their foot into the church. Kill them! it would go to the account of reprisals. But in order to kill eighty persons, a number of executioners were required.

A kind of tribunal improvised by Jourdan sat in one of the halls of the palace; it had a clerk named Raphael, a president half Italian and half French, an orator in the popular dialect named Barbe Savournin de la Roua; besides these there were three or four poor devils, — a baker, a charcoal-burner, — the names are lost in the greatness of the occasion. Those were the people who cried, "We must kill them all! if any are left alive, they will bear witness against us!"

As we have said, however, there were not enough men to do the killing. There were scarcely twenty men in the court, all belonging to the lower class, — a wig-maker, a shoemaker, a cobbler, a mason, a carpenter, — all poorly armed, with weapons taken up by chance; one with a sword, another with a bayonet; that one with a bar of iron, this one with a wooden club hardened in the fire. All these persons were shivering in a cold October rain. It was difficult to make assassins of them.

Nothing, however, is difficult to the Devil. There are, in these matters, times when it seems as if God turned away his face. Then it is the Devil's turn. He entered in person into the cold and dripping court. He had the appearance, form, and face of an apothecary of the country, named Mendes; he set up a table lighted by two lanterns; upon it he placed glasses, jugs, pitchers, and bottles. What was the infernal beverage enclosed in these vessels? No one could tell, but the effect was well known. All those

who drank of the diabolical liquor suddenly felt a raging fever, a desire for murder and blood. From that time they needed only to be shown the door, and they found their way into the cells.

The massacre lasted all night; all night long the cries, the wailings, and the death-rattle were heard in the shadows. They cut every one's throat, men and women alike; it took a long time, for the executioners, as we have said, were drunk and badly armed. However, they reached the end at last.

Among those who killed, a child was conspicuous by reason of his bestial cruelty, his immoderate thirst for blood. He was Lescuyer's son. He killed, and killed again; he boasted of having with his own childish hand killed ten men and four women. "I can kill as many as I please," he said; "I am not yet fifteen years old, and they can do nothing to me."

As fast as they killed they threw dead and wounded, corpses and living bodies, into the Trouillas tower; they fell from a height of sixty feet. The men were thrown first, and then the women.

At nine o'clock in the morning, after twelve hours of this massacre, a voice cried from the depths of this sepulchre: "For God's sake, come and finish me! I cannot die!"

A man, the armorer Bouffier, went down into the hole and looked about; the others did not dare.

"Who cried out?" they asked him.

"Lami," replied Bouffier.

Then, when he was in the midst of them once more, they asked him: "Well, what did you see down there?"

"A queer kind of marmalade," he replied; "all pell-mell, men and women, priests and pretty girls; it was enough to make one split one's sides with laughing."

"Man is certainly a wicked wretch," said the Count of Monte Cristo to M. de Villefort.

Well, it is in this city, still bleeding, warm, and excited with these last massacres, that we are about to introduce the two principal characters of our story.

THE COMPANIONS OF JEHU.

CHAPTER I.

A TABLE D'HÔTE.

On the 9th of October, in the year 1799, on one of those beautiful southern autumn days which, at the two extremities of Provence, ripen the oranges of Hyères and the grapes of St.-Péray, an open carriage drawn by three post-horses crossed at full speed the bridge over the Durance, between Cavailhon and Château-Renard. It was going in the direction of Avignon, the ancient papal city which a decree of the 25th of May, 1791, had, eight years before, reunited to France, — a union which had been confirmed by the treaty signed, in 1797, at Tolentino between General Bonaparte and Pope Pius VI.

The carriage entered by the Aix gate, crossed, without slackening speed, the length of the city, whose narrow and winding streets were protected against wind and sun alike, and stopped a short distance from the gate of Oulle, at the Hotel of the Palais-Egalité, which was just beginning to be called again the Hotel of the Palais-Royal, the name which it had formerly borne, and which it bears to this day.

These few words concerning the title of the hotel indicate sufficiently well the state of France under that government of Thermidorian reaction which was called the Directory. After the Revolution, which lasted from the 14th of July, 1789, to the Ninth Thermidor, 1794; after the days of the 5th and 6th of October, the 21st of June, the 10th of August, the 2d and 3d of September, the 21st of May, the Twenty-ninth Thermidor, and the First Prairial; after having watched the fall of the heads of the king and his judges, of the queen and her accuser, of the Girondins and the Cordeliers, of the Moderates and the Jacobins, France had experienced that most frightful and nauseating of all forms of lassitude, — a surfeit of blood. She came out from it, if not with a need for royalty, at least with a desire for a strong government, in which she could put her confidence, upon which she could lean, which would act for her, and would permit her to seek repose while it bore the responsibility.

Instead of this vaguely desired government, there was the feeble and irresolute Directory, composed just then of the voluptuous Barras, the intriguing Sieyès, the brave Moulins, the insignificant Roger Ducos, and the honest but rather too naïve Gohier. The result of this was a mediocre dignity without, and a doubtful peace within.

It is true that at the time of which we are speaking, the French armies, so glorious during the epic campaigns of 1796 and 1797, although momentarily thrown back towards France by the incapacity of Scherer at Verona and Cassano, and by the defeat and death of Joubert at Novi, had again assumed the offensive. Moreau had beaten Souvaroff at Bassignano; Brune had conquered the Duke of York and General Hermann at Bergen; Masséna had annihilated the Austro-Russians at Zurich, — Korsakof had escaped with great difficulty, and the Austrian Hotz

and three other generals had been killed, while five had been taken prisoners. Masséna had saved France at Zurich, as ninety years before Villars had saved it at Denain.

But in the interior, affairs were not in such good condition, and the directoral government was embarrassed between the war of la Vendée and the brigandages of the South, to which the population of Avignon were no strangers. The two travellers who descended from the post-chaise had good reason to fear the state of mind in which they might find the always agitated population of the papal city; for, a little beyond Orgon, at a place where three roads met, — one going to Nismes, a second to Carpentras, and a third to Avignon, — the postilion had stopped his horses, and turning around, had asked, —

"Will the citizens go by the way of Avignon or Carpentras?"

"Which is the shorter of the two routes?" one of the two travellers had demanded, in a quick, sonorous voice. Although he was evidently considerably older than his companion, yet he himself had scarcely seen his thirtieth year.

"Oh, the road to Avignon, citizen, is at least a good league and a half shorter."

"Then," was the reply, "let us go by way of Avignon."

And the carriage had started on again at a pace that announced that the citizens, as the postilion called them, although the appellation of "monsieur" was again coming into use, paid at least thirty sous for guides.

The same desire to lose no time was manifested at the entrance to the hotel. There, as on the road, it was the older of the two travellers who was spokesman. He asked if they could have dinner immediately, and the form of the question indicated that he was willing to overlook

many gastronomic requirements, provided the repast was promptly served.

"Citizen," replied the landlord, who, at the sound of the carriage, had run, napkin in hand, to meet the travellers, "you will be quickly and suitably served in your own room; but if I might be allowed to give you a little advice —"

He hesitated.

"Oh, give it! give it!" said the younger of the two travellers, speaking for the first time.

"Well, it would be simply, to dine at the *table d'hôte*, as the traveller who is going away in this other carriage is doing at this very moment; the dinner is excellent, and ready served."

The landlord, as he spoke, indicated a carriage fitted with every convenience, to which were harnessed two horses who were pawing the ground restlessly, while the postilion was allaying his impatience by emptying a bottle of Cahors wine, as he sat on the window-ledge.

The first impulse of the one to whom the offer had been made was to decline it; however, after a moment's reflection the elder of the two travellers, as if he had repented of his decision, made a questioning sign to his companion. The latter replied with a look which signified, "You know very well that I am at your command."

"Well, then, let it be so," said he who seemed to be appointed to take the initiative; "we will dine at the *table d'hôte*." Turning to the postilion, who, hat in hand, was awaiting his orders, he said, "In half an hour, at the latest, have the horses ready."

Then, at a sign from the landlord, the two entered the dining-room, the elder walking first and the other following.

One knows the impression which new-comers generally

produce at a *table d'hôte.* All eyes were turned towards the arrivals, and the conversation, which had been animated, was interrupted.

The company consisted of the *habitués* of the hotel, of the traveller whose carriage was waiting at the door, of a wine-merchant of Bordeaux, the cause of whose momentary sojourn at Avignon we shall learn later, and of several travellers returning from Marseilles to Lyons by diligence.

The new-comers saluted the company by a slight inclination of the head, and placed themselves at the extremity of the table, leaving three or four places between themselves and the other guests. This aristocratic reserve redoubled the curiosity of which they were the object; and there was a general impression that they were people of undoubted distinction, although their garments were of the utmost simplicity. Both wore the boot-tops over small-clothes, the long-skirted coat, the travelling cloak, and the broad-brimmed hat which formed the costume of all young men of that epoch; but that which distinguished them from the fashionables of Paris, and even of the provinces, was their long, straight hair, and the black neck-cloth which they wore close about the neck, like soldiers. The fops, as the fashionable young men of the day were called, wore their hair puffed upon the temples and turned back into a chignon behind the head, and an immense cravat with long, floating ends, in which the chin was lost. Some even carried the reaction so far as to use powder.

As for the faces of the two young men, they offered completely opposite types. The elder of the two — he who had several times already taken the initiative, and whose voice, even in familiar conversation, denoted the habit of command — was, as we have said, a man of about thirty years, with black hair parted in the middle and falling long

and straight, from the temples to the shoulders. He had the tanned complexion of a man who has travelled in southern countries, thin lips, straight nose, white teeth, and the falcon eyes that Dante gives to Cæsar. He was short rather than tall; his hands were delicate, and his feet slender and elegant; there was in his manner a certain awkwardness, which indicated that he wore at the moment a costume to which he was not accustomed; and when he spoke, if he had been upon the banks of the Loire instead of on the borders of the Rhone, it would have been remarked that there was in his pronunciation a certain Italian accent.

His companion appeared to be three or four years younger. He was a handsome young man with a rosy complexion, blond hair, clear blue eyes, a firm, straight nose, and a pronounced but almost beardless chin. He might have been two inches taller than the other; and although above the average height, he was so well proportioned and so admirably free in all his movements, that it was plainly to be seen that he was, if not of a strength, at least of an agility and address, far from common.

Although they were clad in the same manner, and were apparently upon an equal footing, the younger seemed to feel for the elder a remarkable deference, which, since it could not proceed from a disparity in age, must have been caused by an inferiority in social condition. Furthermore, he called his companion "citizen," while the other styled him simply Roland.

These remarks, which we have made in order the better to initiate the reader into our story, were probably not pursued to their full length by the guests at the *table d'hôte;* for, after giving their attention to the newcomers for a brief space of time, they ceased to scruti-

nize them, and the interrupted conversation resumed its course. It certainly bore upon a subject of the utmost interest to travellers; it concerned the stopping of a diligence loaded with the sum of sixty thousand francs belonging to the government. The detention had taken place on the previous day, upon the road from Marseilles to Avignon, between Lambesc and Pont-Royal.

At the first words that were uttered upon the subject, the two young men listened with unmistakable interest. The incident had taken place upon the very road which they had just traversed, and the person who was relating it had been one of the principal actors in the scene. It was the wine-merchant of Bordeaux.

Those who appeared to be most eager for details were the passengers of the diligence which had just arrived and was about to start again. The other guests — those who belonged to the locality — appeared to be sufficiently familiar with this sort of catastrophe to be able to give details themselves, instead of receiving them.

"And so, citizen," said a fat man, against whom a tall, thin, withered woman was pressing close in terror, "you say it was upon the very road over which we have just passed that the theft was committed?"

"Yes, citizen, between Lambesc and Pont-Royal. Did you notice a place where the road ascends, and is shut in between two hillocks? There are a great many rocks just there."

"Yes, yes, dear," said the woman, pressing her husband's arm; "I noticed it. I even said to you, if you remember, 'This is a bad place, and I would rather pass through it in the daytime than at night.'"

"Oh, Madame!" said a young man who affected the lisping speech of the period, and who, on ordinary occasions, appeared to rule the conversation of the *table d'hôte*,

you know that for Messieurs the 'companions of Jehu' there is neither night nor day."

"How, citizen?" demanded the woman, still more terrified, "were they stopped in full daylight?"

"In full daylight, citizeness; at ten o'clock in the morning."

"And how many of them were there?" asked the fat man.

"Four, citizen."

"In ambush along the road?"

"No; they came up on horseback, armed to the teeth, and masked."

"That is their custom," observed the young *habitué* of the *table d'hôte;* "they said, did they not, 'Do not defend yourselves; no harm will be done you; we only want the government money.'"

"Word for word, citizen."

"Then," continued the one who seemed to be so well informed, "two of them dismounted, threw the bridles of their horses to their companions, and summoned the driver to give the money to them."

"Citizen," said the fat man, in amazement, "you relate the thing as if you had seen it."

"Perhaps Monsieur was there," suggested one of the travellers, in a tone half joking, half suspicious.

"I am not sure, citizen, whether, in saying that, you intended to be impolite to me," carelessly remarked the young man who had just come so effectively to the aid of the narrator; "but my political opinions forbid me to regard your suspicion as an insult. If I had had the misfortune to be of the number of those who were molested, or the honor of being one of those who attacked, I should tell of it with as much readiness in the one case as in the other; but yesterday morning at

ten o'clock, at the very moment when the diligence was stopped four leagues from here, I was tranquilly breakfasting at this very place, and with these same two citizens who at this moment are doing me the honor of sitting at my right and left."

"And," asked the younger of the two travellers who had just taken their places at the table, the one whom his companion designated by the name of Roland, "how many of you were there in the diligence?"

"Wait a moment; I believe there were — yes, that's right — there were seven men and three women."

"Seven men not counting the driver?" repeated Roland.

"Yes."

"And with seven men you allowed yourselves to be plundered by four bandits? Accept my compliments, gentlemen."

"We knew with whom we had to do," replied the wine-merchant; "and we were not inclined to defend ourselves."

"What!" rejoined the young man; "with whom you had to do? But you had to do, it seems to me, with thieves, bandits!"

"Not at all; they gave their name."

"Their name?"

"They said, 'Gentlemen, it is useless to defend yourselves; ladies, do not be frightened; we are not brigands, — we are companions of Jehu.'"

"Yes," said the young man of the *table d'hôte*, "they give notice, so there shall be no mistake. They always do it."

"Ah," said Roland, "and who then is this Jehu who has such polite companions? Is he their captain?"

"Sir," said a man whose costume made him look like

a secularized priest, and who appeared to be not only an *habitué* of the *table d'hôte*, but to be also initiated into the mysteries of the honorable body whose merits were being discussed, "if you were better versed than you appear to be in the reading of Holy Writ, you would know that it is something like two thousand six hundred years since Jehu died, and that, consequently, he is not at present in a situation to be stopping diligences on the high-road."

"Monsieur l'Abbé," rejoined Roland, who had recognized an ecclesiastic, "as. in spite of the acrimonious tone in which you speak, you appear to be well instructed, will you permit an ignoramus to ask of you some details concerning this Jehu who has been dead two thousand six hundred years, but who, nevertheless, has the honor of possessing companions who bear his name?"

"Jehu," replied the churchman, in the same sharp tone, "was a king of Israel, consecrated by Elisha, upon condition that he would punish the crimes of the house of Ahab and Jezebel, and put to death all the priests of Baal."

"Monsieur l'Abbé," replied the young man, laughing, "I am much obliged to you for your explanation. I have no doubt it is very exact, and above all very learned; but I must confess it does not teach me much."

"What, citizen!" said the other, "you do not understand that Jehu is His Majesty Louis XVIII., consecrated upon condition of punishing the crimes of the Revolution and of putting to death the priests of Baal, which is to say, all those who have taken any part whatever in this abominable state of things which for the last seven years they have called the Republic?"

"Oh," said the young man, "now I comprehend. But," he continued, "among those whom the compan-

ions of Jehu are sworn to attack, do you reckon the brave soldiers who have repulsed the enemy from the frontiers of France, and the illustrious generals who have commanded the armies of Tyrol, Sambre-et-Meuse, and Italy?"

"Certainly; those first and foremost."

The eyes of the young man flashed lightning; his nostrils dilated, his lips were compressed; he rose from his chair; but his companion caught him by the coat and made him sit down again, while with a look he imposed silence upon him. Then the one who had just given such proof of his power, spoke for the first time.

"Citizen," said he, addressing the young man of the *table d'hôte*, "pardon two travellers who have come from the ends of the earth, as they say of America and India; who left France two years ago; who are completely ignorant of what is going on, and who desire to be instructed."

"That is very natural," replied the one to whom these words were addressed. "Ask your questions, and we will answer."

"Well," continued the dark young man with the eagle eye and the straight black hair, "now that I know who Jehu is, and for what end his companions are banded together, I would like to know what they do with the money they take."

"Oh, that 's very simple, citizen; you know that there is great talk of a restoration of the Bourbon monarchy?"

"No, I did not know it," said the dark young man, in a tone which he vainly endeavored to render naïve. "I have come, as I told you, from the ends of the earth."

"What! you did n't know that? Well, in six months it will be an accomplished fact."

"Indeed!"

"It is just as I tell you, citizen."

The two young men of military appearance exchanged a look and a smile, although the younger appeared to be laboring under intense impatience. Their companion continued, —

"Lyons is the headquarters of the conspiracy, if that can be called a conspiracy which is organized openly; the name of 'provisional government' would be a better one."

"Ah, well, citizen," said the dark young man, with a politeness which was not entirely free from sarcasm, "let us say 'provisional government.'"

"This provisional government has its staff and its armies."

"Bah! Its staff, perhaps; but its armies — "

"Its armies, I repeat."

"Where are they?"

"One of them is organized in the mountains of Auvergne under the orders of M. de Chardon; another in the Jura mountains under the command of M. Teyssonnet; and a third is located, and very pleasantly just now, in la Vendée, under the orders of Escarboville, Achille Leblond, and Cadoudal."

"Upon my word, citizen, you do me a great service in telling me all this news. I believed the Bourbons to be completely resigned to exile; I believed that there existed neither a royalist provisional committee in the cities, nor bandits on the high-roads; and finally, I believed la Vendée to be completely pacified by General Hoche."

The young man to whom this reply was addressed laughed aloud. "Where did you come from?" he asked. "Where did you come from?"

"I told you, citizen, — from the ends of the earth."

"That is easily seen." Then, continuing: "Well, you understand," he said, "the Bourbons are not rich; the

emigrants, whose property has been confiscated, are ruined; it is impossible to organize two armies, and keep together a third, without money. They were embarrassed; there was only the Republic which could pay its enemies. Now it was not probable that it would do this willingly; and, therefore, without trying the issue, it was decided that the shorter way would be to take the money rather than ask for it."

"Ah, now I understand."

"The companions of Jehu are the agents between the Republic and the revolutionists, — the tax-gatherers for the royalist generals."

"Yes; it is not a theft, it is a military operation, — one deed of arms against another."

"Exactly, citizen; you have it; and now you know as much about it as we do."

"But," timidly interpolated the wine-merchant from Bordeaux, "if Messieurs the companions of Jehu — you will notice that I do not speak ill of them — if Messieurs the companions of Jehu only want government money — "

"Government money, and no other; they have never taken from a private individual."

"Never?"

"Never."

"How does it happen, then, that yesterday, with the government money, they carried off two hundred louis which belonged to me?"

"My dear sir," replied the young man of the *table d'hôte*, "I have already told you that there was some mistake about that; and as sure as my name is Alfred de Barjols, that money will be returned to you some day."

The wine-merchant sighed, and shook his head with the manner of one who, in spite of assurances, still retains some doubt. But at this moment, as if the declaration

of the young man (who had just revealed his social condition by giving his name) had awakened the delicacy of those whose good faith he had guaranteed, a horse stopped at the door, steps were heard in the corridor, the door of the dining-room opened, and a man masked, and armed to the teeth, stood upon the threshold.

"Gentlemen," said he, breaking the profound silence caused by his appearance, "is there among you a traveller named Jean Picot, who was yesterday in the diligence which was stopped between Lambesc and Pont-Royal?"

"Yes," said the wine-merchant, in amazement.

"Is it you?" asked the masked man.

"It is I."

"Was anything taken from you?"

"Yes, indeed; they took from me two hundred louis, which I had confided to the care of the driver."

"And I may add," observed the young noble, "that Monsieur was speaking of them at this very moment, and thinking of them as lost."

"Monsieur was wrong," said the masked unknown; "we make war upon the government, not upon private individuals; we are partisans, not thieves. Here are your two hundred louis, Monsieur, and if such an error occurs in future, claim your property and mention the name of Morgan."

With these words the masked man deposited a bag of gold at the wine-merchant's right hand, bowed courteously to the company at the table, and went out, leaving some terrified, and others stunned at the thought of such boldness.

CHAPTER II.

AN ITALIAN PROVERB.

But these two sentiments did not manifest themselves in an equal degree among all the members of the company. The points of difference were graduated according to the age, the sex, the character, and even the social position of the guests.

The wine-merchant, Jean Picot, the one most interested in the scene which had just taken place, had recognized at a glance the costume, the arms, and the mask of one of the men who had attacked him on the previous day, and had at first been struck speechless with terror; then, as he had gradually comprehended the motive for the mysterious bandit's visit, he had by degrees passed from fright to joy. His bag of gold was near him, but he seemed afraid to touch it; perhaps he feared to see it vanish at his touch, like gold which we seem to find in dreams, and which disappears even before we open our eyes.

The fat gentleman of the diligence and his wife, as well as the other travellers by that conveyance, had betrayed unaffected and absolute terror. Placed at the left of Jean Picot, the fat man, when he had seen the bandit approaching the wine-merchant, had, in the vain hope of maintaining an honest distance between himself and the companion of Jehu, drawn back his chair against that of his wife, who, yielding to the pressure, had tried to draw back in her turn. But as the chair which came next belonged to the citizen Alfred de Barjols, who had no reason to fear men

of whom he had just expressed such a high opinion, the chair of the fat man's wife had found an obstacle in the immobility of that of the young noble; so that, as happened eight or nine months later at Marengo, when the general-in-chief judged that it was time to resume the offensive, the retreat stopped.

As for the latter, — we are speaking of Alfred de Barjols, — he, like the abbé who had given the biblical explanation concerning Jehu, King of Israel, and the mission which he had received from Elisha, looked like a man who not only feels no fear, but who even feels no surprise at events, no matter how unexpected they may be. There was a smile upon his lips, as he closely watched the masked man; and if all the guests had not been so preoccupied with the two principal actors in the drama, they might have detected an almost imperceptible but significant glance which was exchanged between the bandit and the young noble, — a signal which was instantly reproduced between the young noble and the abbé.

For their part, the two travellers who had last entered the dining-room, and who sat by themselves at the extremity of the table, had followed the instincts of their different characters. The younger of the two had instinctively carried his hand to his side, as if in search of an absent weapon, and had risen as if with the intention of throwing himself at the throat of the masked man, which would undoubtedly have happened if he had been alone; but the elder, he who appeared to have the authority as well as the habit of giving orders, contented himself, as on a former occasion, with seizing hold of his coat, and saying peremptorily and almost sternly, "Sit down, Roland!" And the young man obeyed.

But the one who remained, in appearance at least, the most imperturbable of all, was a man thirty three or four

years of age, with light hair, a reddish beard, a calm and beautiful face, large blue eyes, a clear complexion, delicate and intelligent lips, a tall figure, and a foreign accent which betrayed him, as far as could be judged from the few words which escaped him, to be a native of England. But in spite of this accent, he spoke the French language with extraordinary purity. At the first word which he had pronounced, and in which he had revealed his nationality, the elder of the two travellers had started, and, turning towards his companion, who was evidently accustomed to reading his thoughts in his face, he seemed to ask him why an Englishman should be found in France at a time when the bloody war between the two nations naturally exiled the English from France, as well as the French from England. Apparently Roland had no explanation to offer, for he replied with a glance and a shrug which signified, "It appears as extraordinary to me as to you; but if you, the prince of mathematicians, cannot solve the problem, you must not expect me to."

It was at least clear to the minds of the two young men that the blond man with the English accent was the traveller whose comfortable carriage was in waiting at the door of the hotel, and that he was from London, or at least from some one of the counties of Great Britain. As for the words which he uttered, they were, as we have said, exceedingly rare; so rare that they were in reality more like exclamations than words. At each question which he had asked concerning the state of France, the Englishman had drawn a note-book from his pocket, and begging the wine-merchant, the abbé, or the young noble to repeat his explanation, — which each one had done with a politeness equal to the courtesy which had prompted the demand, — he had made a note of anything important, extraordinary, or picturesque concerning the stopping of

the diligence, the state of la Vendée, and the companions of Jehu, returning thanks each time with voice and gesture, with that reserve familiar to our neighbors across the water, and each time replacing in the side pocket of his coat the newly enriched note-book. Finally, like one who enjoys an unexpected entertainment, he uttered an exclamation of satisfaction at the entrance of the masked man, listened with all his ears, and looked with all his eyes, and did not once lose sight of him until the door had closed behind him; then quickly drawing his note-book from his pocket, he said to his neighbor, who was no other than the abbé, —

"Oh, Monsieur, will you have the kindness, if I do not remember it all correctly, to repeat for me, word for word, what was said by the gentleman who has just gone out?"

He began to write immediately, and with the aid of the abbé's memory he soon had the satisfaction of transcribing literally the words of the companion of Jehu. When this was accomplished, he exclaimed, with an accent which put a strange seal of originality to his words, —

"Oh, how true it is that such things can happen in France alone! France is the most extraordinary country in the world. It is a delight to me, gentlemen, to travel in France and to become acquainted with the French."

And the last phrase was said with so much courtesy and seriousness, that there was nothing for it but to thank the speaker, even though he were the descendant of the conquerors of Cressy, Poictiers, and Agincourt. It was the younger of the two travellers who replied to this civility, in the tone of caustic indifference which appeared to be natural to him, —

"Upon my word, that is my case exactly, my lord. I say 'my lord,' because I take it for granted that you are English."

"Yes, sir," replied the gentleman, "I have that honor."

"Well, as I was saying," resumed the young man, "it is a great pleasure to me to travel in France, and to see what I have seen there. It is only under the government of citizens Gohier, Moulins, Roger Ducos, Sieyès, and Barras that such things could happen; and when, fifty years from now, some one will tell how, in the midst of a city of thirty thousand inhabitants, in broad daylight, a highwayman, with a mask on his face and two pistols and a sabre at his belt, came and brought back to a merchant, who was in despair at having lost them, the two hundred louis of which he had robbed him on the preceding day; when he will add that this took place at a *table d'hôte* at which twenty-five persons were sitting, and that this model bandit was allowed by these twenty-five persons to depart in peace, — I will wager that the one who told such a story as that would be called an infamous liar."

And the young man burst out laughing, but so harshly and nervously, that every one looked at him in astonishment, and his companion fixed his eyes upon him with an almost fatherly anxiety.

"Monsieur," said Alfred de Barjols, who, like all the others, appeared to be impressed by the strange burst of laughter, which was more full of sorrow than mirth, and which he allowed to sink into silence before he spoke, "permit me to observe that the man whom you have just seen is not a highwayman."

"Bah! what else is he?"

"He is, in all probability, a young man of as good family as yours or mine."

"Count Horn, who was broken on the wheel in the Place de Grève, was also a young man of good family. In proof of it, all the nobility of Paris sent carriages to his execution."

"Count Horn had, if I remember correctly, assassinated a Jew in order to steal from him a bill of exchange which he could not pay; but nobody will dare to tell you that a companion of Jehu has ever hurt so much as one hair of an infant's head."

"Well, granted; we will admit that the society is founded upon philanthropic principles, — to re-establish the balance of fortunes, to remedy the caprices of chance, and reform the abuses of society. Although he may be a robber after the fashion of Karl Moor, your friend Morgan — was not that the name by which this honest citizen called himself?"

"Yes," replied the Englishman.

"Well, your friend Morgan is none the less a robber."

Alfred de Barjols became as pale as death. "The citizen Morgan is not my friend," replied the young aristocrat; "but if he were, I should be honored by his friendship."

"No doubt of it," replied Roland, laughing. "As Voltaire says, 'The friendship of a great man is a gift of the gods.'"

"Roland, Roland!" said his companion, in a low voice.

"Oh, General," returned the other, allowing, perhaps designedly, his companion's proper title to escape him, "permit me, I beg of you, to continue with this gentleman a discussion which is so intensely interesting to me."

The other only shrugged his shoulders.

"But, citizen," continued the young man, with strange persistence, "I am still in the dark. I left France two years ago, and since that time so many things have changed, — costume, manners, accent, — that it is only reasonable to suppose that the language itself may have changed also. What is the word which you would apply in this modern language to the stopping of diligences and the taking of money which they carry?"

"Monsieur," replied the young man, in the tone of one who is resolved to sustain his opinion to the end, "I call it making war; and your companion, whom you just called general, will, in his character of soldier, tell you that aside from the pleasure of killing and being killed, generals have always done exactly what Citizen Morgan is doing now."

"What!" cried the young man, "do you dare to compare — "

"Let the gentleman develop his theory, Roland," said the dark traveller, whose eyes, contrary to those of his companion, which seemed to dilate and shoot forth flames, were veiled beneath their long black lashes, in order to conceal what was passing within.

"Ah," said the young man, with his staccato accent, "you are beginning to be interested in the discussion yourself." Then turning to the one whom he seemed to have singled out: "Continue, sir, continue," he said; "the general permits it."

The young noble blushed as intensely as he had paled a moment before, and with his elbows on the table, and his chin in his hands, to bring himself as near as possible to his adversary, he continued, with a provincial accent which grew more marked as he became excited: —

"Since the general permits it," emphasizing the words "the general," "I shall have the honor of telling him, and you also, Monsieur, that I think I remember having read in Plutarch that when Alexander took his departure for India he carried with him only eighteen or twenty talents in gold, which amounts to a hundred or a hundred and twenty francs. Now, do you suppose that it was with these eighteen or twenty talents that he nourished his army, won the battle of Granicus, conquered Asia Minor, overthrew Tyre, Gaza, Syria, Egypt, built Alexan-

dria, penetrated into Lybia, caused the oracle of Ammon to declare him to be the son of Jupiter, penetrated as far as Hyphase, and, as his soldiers refused to follow him any farther, returned to Babylon, to surpass in luxury, in dissipation, and in effeminacy the most debauched and voluptuous of the kings of Asia? Did he get his money in Macedonia; and do you think that King Philip, one of the poorest of the kings of poor Greece, would honor his son's drafts? No; Alexander did as the Citizen Morgan has done; only, instead of stopping diligences upon the high-road, he pillaged cities, put kings to ransom, and levied contributions upon the conquered countries.

"And there is Hannibal. You know, do you not, how he left Carthage? He had not even the eighteen or twenty talents of his predecessor Alexander; nevertheless, as he needed money, he took and sacked, in a time of peace, and in violation of his treaties, the town of Sagonte; from that moment he was rich, and could proceed with his campaigns. If you will pardon me, I will pass from Plutarch to Cornelius Nepos. I will spare you his descent of the Pyrenees, his ascent of the Alps, the three battles which he won, distributing each time the treasures of the vanquished; and I come to the five or six years which he passed in the Campagna. Do you suppose that he and his army paid taxes to the Capuans, and that the bankers of Carthage, who were at war with him, supplied him with funds? No; war nourished war, according to the system of the Citizen Morgan.

"And now for Cæsar. Ah, Cæsar is quite another thing! He left Spain, in debt to the amount of something like thirty millions. He went back again almost clear. Then he left for Gaul, where he stayed with our ancestors for ten years. During those ten years he sent more than a hundred millions to Rome, recrossed the

Alps, passed the Rubicon, marched straight to the Capitol, forced the doors of the temple of Saturn, where the treasure was kept, took enough for his own needs, and not for those of the Republic; and finally he—the man who twenty years before was scarcely allowed by his creditors to leave his little house in the Rue Suburra—died, leaving two or three thousand sesterces for each citizen, ten or twelve millions to Calpurnia, and thirty or forty millions to Octavius. This is precisely the system which Morgan employs; except that Morgan, I am sure, would die before he would touch either the silver of the Gauls or the gold of the Capitol.

"And now let us pass over eighteen hundred years, and come to General Buonaparté — "

And the young aristocrat, as was the fashion among the enemies of the conqueror of Italy, affected to lay stress upon the *u* which Bonaparte had dropped from his name, and upon the *e* from which he had removed the acute accent. This affectation appeared to irritate Roland exceedingly, and he made a movement as if to spring forward; but his companion checked him.

"Never mind, Roland, never mind," he said. "I am sure that the Citizen Barjols is not going to say that General Buonaparté, as he calls him, is a thief."

"No, *I* will not say it; but there is an Italian proverb which says it for me."

"Let us hear the proverb," said the general, taking his companion's place in the dialogue, and this time fixing upon the young noble his clear, calm, and unfathomable eyes.

"Here it is in all its simplicity: *Francesci non sono tutti ladroni, maa buon parte*, which means, 'All Frenchmen are not thieves, but — '"

"A good part of them," said Roland.

"Yes, — Buonaparté," replied Alfred de Barjols.

Scarcely had the insolent word left the mouth of the young aristocrat, before the plate which Roland was fingering flew from his hands and struck the other full in the face.

The women cried out, and the men sprang to their feet. Roland burst out laughing in the nervous way which was habitual to him, and sank back upon his chair. The young aristocrat remained motionless, although a rivulet of blood trickled from his eyebrow down over his cheek.

At this moment the conductor entered, saying, in his accustomed formula, "Come, citizen travellers, the carriage is ready!"

The travellers, in haste to leave the scene of the altercation which they had just witnessed, hurried towards the door.

"Pardon, Monsieur," said Alfred de Barjols to Roland, "you do not go by diligence, I hope?"

"No, Monsieur, I have a post chaise. But you need have no uneasiness; I shall not go."

"Nor I," said the Englishman. "Let them unharness the horses; I shall stay."

"I shall have to go," said the dark young man, with a sigh. "You know that I must, my friend, and that my presence is absolutely necessary yonder. But I swear to you that I should not leave you thus if I could do otherwise." And as he said these words, his voice betrayed an emotion of which its ordinarily firm and metallic tones did not seem capable.

On the contrary, Roland appeared overjoyed. It was as if his warlike nature blossomed out at the approach of the danger which, if he had not actually courted, he had certainly not sought to evade. "Very well, General,"

he said; "we should in any case be obliged to part at Lyons, since you have had the kindness to grant me a month's leave in order to go to Bourg, to my family. It is only sixty leagues the less that we shall travel together, that is all. I will see you again at Paris. But remember, if you need some one who is devoted to you, think of me."

"Make your mind easy, Roland," said the general. Then, looking attentively at the two adversaries: "Above all, Roland," he said to his companion, in a tone of inexpressible tenderness, "don't get killed; and if it is a possible thing, don't kill your opponent, either. That is a fine young man, and I would like some day to have all such on my side."

"I will do my best, General."

Just then the host appeared at the door. "The post-chaise for Paris is ready," he said.

The general took up his hat and cane from a chair; but Roland chose to accompany him bareheaded, so that all might see that he was not going with him. Alfred de Barjols made no objection to his exit. It was easy for him to see that his adversary was of the kind who court quarrels, rather than evade them.

Roland accompanied the general to the carriage, which he entered.

"All the same," said the latter, seating himself, "it makes my heart ache, Roland, to leave you here, without a friend to act as your second."

"Don't make yourself uneasy about that, General; there are always plenty of seconds. There are, and always will be, people who are curious to see how one man kills another."

"Au revoir, Roland. Notice that I say *au revoir*, and not *adieu*."

"Yes, my dear General," replied the young man, in a softened voice, "I hear it, and I thank you."

"Promise to send me word as soon as the affair is over, or to get some one to write for you if you are not able to do it yourself."

"Oh, never fear, General; in less than four days you shall have a letter from me," replied Roland. Then he added bitterly: "Have you not seen already that there is a fatality about me which will not let me die?"

"Roland!" said the general, severely, "again?"

"Oh, it is nothing, nothing!" said the young man, shaking his head, and affecting an expression of careless gayety, which must have been habitual to him before he had met with the unknown misfortune which apparently made him court death, although still so young.

"Well, by the way, try to find out one thing."

"What is that, General?"

"How it happens that while we are at war with England, an Englishman is travelling through France as freely and unconcernedly as if he were at home."

"Good! I will find out."

"How?"

"I don't know yet; but if I say I will find out, I will, even if I have to ask himself."

"Reckless fellow! Don't get involved in another quarrel on this account."

"At all events, if it came to that, since he is an enemy, it would be a fight rather than a duel."

"Well, once more au revoir, and embrace me."

Roland threw himself with a movement of passionate gratitude upon the neck of the man who had just given him this permission.

"Oh, General," he cried, "how happy I should be — if I were not so wretched!"

The general looked at him affectionately. "Some day you will tell me your trouble, will you not, Ronald?" he said.

Roland burst into the miserable laugh which had two or three times before escaped his lips. "Oh, no, indeed!" he said. "You would laugh at me."

The general looked at him as if he thought him crazy. "Ah, well," he said, "we must take people as we find them."

"Particularly when they are not what they appear to be."

"You mistake me for Œdipus, and you read me riddles, Roland."

"Ah, if you guess this one, General, I will salute you king of Thebes. But I am forgetting that every moment is precious to you, and that I am keeping you here uselessly."

"You are right. Have you any commissions for Paris?"

"Three, — my love to Bourrienne, my respects to your brother Lucien, and my tenderest homage to Mme. Bonaparte."

"It shall be as you desire."

"Where shall I find you again in Paris?"

"In my house in the Rue Victoire, or perhaps — "

"Perhaps — "

"Who knows? perhaps at Luxembourg!" Then throwing himself back, as if he regretted having said so much, even to his best friend, he called to the postilion: "The road to Orange, and as fast as possible."

The postilion, who was only waiting for the order, whipped his horses; the carriage started with a roll like thunder, and disappeared through the gate of Oulle.

CHAPTER III.

THE ENGLISHMAN.

ROLAND remained motionless, not only until the carriage had disappeared, but for a long time afterwards. Then shaking his head, as if to scatter from his forehead the cloud which darkened it, he re-entered the hotel and asked for a room.

"Take Monsieur to No. 3," said the landlord to a chambermaid.

The chambermaid took a key from a large tablet of black wood, on which some white numbers were arranged in two lines, and made a sign to the young traveller to follow her.

"Send me up some paper, pens, and ink," said the young man to the landlord; "and if M. Barjols asks where I am, give him the number of my room."

The landlord promised to attend to Roland's wishes, and he followed the girl, whistling the Marseillaise. Five minutes afterwards he was seated at his table, with the wished-for pen, ink, and paper before him. But he had not traced a line before some one knocked three times at his door.

"Come in," he said, wheeling his chair around in order to face his visitor, whom he supposed to be either M. de Barjols or one of his friends.

The door opened with a machine-like regularity, and the Englishman appeared upon the threshold.

"Ah," cried Roland, delighted with the visit, because of what the general had said to him, "is it you?"

"Yes," said the Englishman, "it is I."

"You are welcome."

"Oh, I am glad if I am welcome. I did not know whether I ought to come."

"Why not?"

"Because of Aboukir."

Roland laughed. "There were two battles of Aboukir," he said, — "one that we lost, and one that we won."

"I mean because of the one that you lost."

"Oh," said Roland, "men fight, and kill each other, and are exterminated on the field of battle; but that is no reason why we should not shake hands on neutral ground. I repeat, therefore, you are welcome, particularly if you will tell me why you have come."

"Thanks; but first read this." The Englishman drew a paper from his pocket.

"What is this?" asked Roland.

"My passport."

"What have I to do with your passport?" asked Roland. "I am not a gendarme."

"No; but as I have come to offer you my services, perhaps you would not accept them if you did not know who I was."

"Your services?"

"Yes; but read."

Roland read: —

In the name of the French Republic, the Executive Directory desires that Sir John Tanlay be allowed to travel freely throughout the extent of the territory of the Republic, and that he receive protection and aid in case of need.

(Signed) FOUCHÉ.

And lower:

I particularly recommend that Sir John Tanlay receive all privileges, as a philanthropist and a friend of liberty.

(Signed) BARRAS.

"You have read it?"

"Oh, yes, I have read it; what then?"

"Oh, what then? Well, my father, Lord Tanlay, performed certain services for M. Barras, and that is why M. Barras permits me to travel through France; and I am very glad to do it, for I find it very entertaining."

"Oh, I remember, Sir John; I heard you say as much at the table."

"Yes, I did say it; and I also said that I was very fond of the French."

Roland bowed.

"And, above all, of General Bonaparte," continued Sir John.

"You are fond of General Bonaparte?"

"I admire him. He is a great, a very great man."

"Upon my soul, Sir John, I am sorry that he cannot hear an Englishman say that of him."

"Oh, if he were here, I should not say it."

"Why not?"

"I would not like to have him think that I said it to please him. I say it because I think so."

"I do not doubt it, my lord," replied Roland, who did not know what object the Englishman had in view, and who, having learned from the passport all that he wished to know, suddenly became reserved.

"And when I saw," continued the Englishman, with the same gravity, "that you took the general's part, I was much pleased."

"Indeed?"

"Much pleased," repeated the Englishman, with an affirmative movement of the head.

"So much the better."

"But when I saw you throw a plate at M. de Barjols's head, I did not like it."

"And why not, my lord?"

"Because in England a gentleman does not throw a plate at another gentleman's head."

"My lord," said Roland, rising and frowning, "did you come here to read me a lecture?"

"Oh, no; I came to say to you, perhaps you are having some trouble to procure a second?"

"To tell you the truth, Sir John, that is the fact; and just as you knocked at the door, I was asking myself whom I could call upon to do me this service."

"If you like," said the Englishman, "I will be your second."

"I accept gratefully," replied Roland.

"That is what I came to say to you."

Roland held out his hand. "Thanks!" he said.

The Englishman bowed.

"And now," continued Roland, "since you had the thoughtfulness, my lord, to tell me who you were before you offered your services, it is only right for me, when I accept them, to tell you of myself."

"Oh, just as you like."

"My name is Louis de Montrevel; I am *aide-de-camp* to General Bonaparte."

"*Aide-de-camp* to General Bonaparte! I am very glad of it."

"This will explain to you why I espoused, perhaps a little too warmly, the cause of my general."

"No, not too warmly; only the plate—"

"Yes, I know,—the provocation did not equal the plate. But, you see, I held it in my hand, and did not know what to do with it; so I threw it at M. de Barjols's head. It went of itself, before I knew it."

"You are not going to tell him that?"

"Not at all; I tell it to you to ease your conscience."

"Very well; then you intend to fight?"

"Certainly; that is why I stayed over."

"And with what will you fight?"

"That will not concern you, my lord."

"Not concern me?"

"No; M. de Barjols is the insulted party, and it is for him to choose the kind of weapon."

"Then you will accept whatever he proposes?"

"Not I, Sir John, but you for me, since you are good enough to act as my second."

"And if he chooses pistols, at what distance and in what manner do you wish to fight?"

"That, my lord, is your affair, and not mine. I do not know how these things are managed in England, but in France the combatants have nothing to do with the details. The seconds arrange everything, and whatever they do is right."

"Then whatever I do will be right?"

"Perfectly right, my lord."

The Englishman bowed. "The hour and day?"

"Oh, as soon as possible. I have not seen my family for two years, and I am eager to meet them again."

The Englishman looked at Roland in astonishment; he spoke with as much assurance as if he were certain of not being killed.

Just then some one knocked at the door, and the landlord's voice asked, "May I come in?"

The young man replied in the affirmative. The door opened, and the landlord entered, holding in his hand a card, which he presented to his guest. The young man took the card and read, "Charles de Valensolle."

"From M. Alfred de Barjols," said the landlord.

"Very well," said Roland.

Then, passing the card to the Englishman, "Here, this concerns you," he said. "It is useless for me to see this gentleman. He is M. de Barjols's second, and you are mine; arrange the thing between you; only," he added, pressing the Englishman's hand and looking at him fixedly, "this is a serious matter. I will not interfere with your arrangements if you make it possible for one or the other of us to be killed."

"I will act as if it were for myself," replied the other.

"Then go; and when all is arranged, come back here. I shall not go away."

Sir John followed the landlord; Roland reseated himself, and turned his chair once more towards the table. He took his pen and began to write.

When Sir John returned, Roland had written and sealed three letters, and was just addressing the last one. He motioned to the Englishman to wait until he had finished, so that he could give him his full attention. He finished addressing the letter, sealed it, and turned around.

"Well," he asked, "is everything arranged?"

"Yes," replied the Englishman, "and very easily. Your opponent is a true gentleman."

"So much the better," returned Roland. And he waited.

"You will fight in two hours at the fountain of Vaucluse, — a charming spot, — with pistols, walking towards each other, each one firing when he pleases, and being allowed to advance after his adversary has fired."

"Upon my word, you are right, Sir John! You have done well. Did you arrange it?"

"I and M. de Barjols's second, your adversary having renounced all his privileges as the insulted party."

"Have you decided upon the weapons?"

"I offered my pistols, and they were accepted, upon my giving my word of honor that they were as unknown to you as to M. de Barjols. They are excellent weapons, with which, at twenty paces, I have cut a ball upon the blade of a knife."

"Whew! you must shoot pretty well, my lord."

"Yes; I am, so they say, the best shot in England."

"That is a good thing to know; when I want to get killed, Sir John, I shall pick a quarrel with you."

"Oh, do not seek a quarrel with me," said the Englishman, "for I should be very sorry to be obliged to fight you."

"I will try, my lord, not to trouble you in that way. And so it is to be in two hours?"

"Yes; you told me that you were in haste."

"Exactly. How far is it from here to this charming place?"

"You mean Vaucluse?"

"Yes."

"Four leagues."

"That will take an hour and a half. We have no time to lose; let us dispose of business, and then we can enjoy ourselves."

The Englishman looked at the young man in astonishment. Roland seemed to pay no attention to the look.

"Here are three letters," he said: "one for Mme. de Montrevel, my mother; one for Mlle. de Montrevel, my sister; one for the Citizen Bonaparte, my general. If I am killed, you will simply post them. Am I asking too much?"

"If this misfortune should occur, I will deliver the letters myself," replied the Englishman. "Where do your mother and sister live?"

"At Bourg, in the department of the Ain."

"That is not far from here," replied the Englishman. "As for General Bonaparte, I will go to Egypt, if necessary. I should be very glad to meet General Bonaparte."

"If you take the trouble to carry them yourself, my lord, as you suggest, you will not be obliged to take a long journey. In three days General Bonaparte will be in Paris."

"Oh," replied the Englishman, without manifesting the least astonishment, "you think so?"

"I am sure of it," replied Roland.

"General Bonaparte is a very extraordinary man. And now, have you any other commands for me?"

"Only one, my lord."

"As many as you will."

"Thanks; there is only one, but it is very important."

"Go on."

"If I am killed — but I don't think there is much chance of it."

Sir John looked at Roland with the same astonishment which he had already three or four times betrayed.

"If I am killed," repeated Roland, "for after all, it is just as well to take precautions — "

"Yes, I understand. If you are killed — "

"Listen attentively now, my lord, for in this thing my directions must be followed explicitly."

"It shall be as you say," replied the Englishman. "I am a very exact man."

"Well, then, if I am killed," repeated Roland, rising and laying his hand upon his companion's shoulder, as if to impress upon his memory the words which he was about to speak, "you will put my body — just as it is, all dressed, without allowing any one to touch it — in a leaden casket, which you will cause to be soldered in your presence; you will enclose the leaden casket in an oaken

box, which will be nailed up before you; and finally, you will send it to my mother, unless you like better to throw the whole thing into the Rhone, which I leave absolutely to your own choice, provided you will really have it thrown there."

"It will be no more trouble to me," returned the Englishman, "since I am to carry the letter, to take the coffin along with me."

"Then upon my word, my lord," said Roland, with one of his strange bursts of laughter, "you are a charming man, and you must have been sent to me by Providence itself. And now we must be going."

They both left Roland's room. That of Sir John was on the same landing, and Roland waited while the Englishman entered it to procure his arms. He came out again after a few minutes, holding in his hands a box of pistols.

"And now, my lord," said Roland, "how do we go to Vaucluse, — by carriage or on horseback?"

"In a carriage, if you like. A carriage is much more convenient if one is wounded. Mine is waiting below."

"I thought you had had it unharnessed."

"I did give the order, but I had them run after the postilion and countermand it."

They went downstairs.

"Tom! Tom!" called Sir John to his servant, a domestic in the severe livery of an English groom, "take care of this box."

"I am going with my lord?" asked the servant, in English.

"Yes," replied Sir John. Then, indicating to Roland the step of the carriage, which his servant had just lowered, "Come, Monsieur de Montrevel," said he.

Roland entered the carriage and stretched himself out

luxuriously. "It is a fact," he said, "that you English are the only ones who really understand travelling-carriages. This one is as easy as a bed."

"Yes," replied Sir John, "the English understand very well how to make themselves comfortable; but the French are a most singular and amusing people. Postilion, to Vaucluse."

CHAPTER IV.

THE DUEL.

THERE was no road beyond Isle. The three leagues from Avignon to Isle were traversed in an hour. During that hour, Roland, as if he had determined to make the time seem short to his companion, was full of life and wit. The nearer he approached the place of meeting the more his gayety increased. No one who was ignorant of the cause of the journey would have suspected that this young man, whose talk and laugh were incessant, was threatened with mortal danger. At the village of Isle they were obliged to leave their carriage. Upon inquiry, they learned that they were the first arrivals. They entered the path which led to the fountain.

"Oh," cried Roland, "there must be a fine echo here." He uttered two or three cries, which the echo repeated most obligingly. "Upon my word," said the young man, "this is a magnificent echo. I know none which can be compared with it, except that of the Seinonnetta, at Milan. Listen, my lord." And he began, with modulations which showed an admirable voice as well as an excellent method, to sing a Tyrolienne, which seemed a defiance borne by the returning notes to the human throat.

Sir John looked and listened with an astonishment which he no longer troubled himself to conceal. When the last note had died away in the hollows of the mountain, "Damn it all!" said Sir John, "I believe you've got the blues."

Roland started, and looked at him as if to question him. But seeing that Sir John said no more, he asked, "What makes you think so?"

"You are too boisterously gay not to be profoundly sad."

"Well, and does this anomaly astonish you?"

"Nothing astonishes me. There is a reason for everything."

"You are right; the secret lies in being behind the scenes. Well, I am going to take you there."

"Oh, I don't want to force your confidence."

"You are too courteous for that; but you will not deny that you would like to understand me?"

"Through interest in you, — yes."

"Well, my lord, this is the explanation of the enigma, and I am about to tell you what I have never before told any one. I am apparently in excellent health; but I am afflicted with an aneurism, from which I suffer horribly. I may have at any moment spasms, attacks of weakness, or fainting spells, which would shame a woman. I pass my life in taking ridiculous precautions; and in spite of all, Larrey has warned me that I may die at a moment's notice, the diseased artery being likely to break at the least exertion. You may judge how amusing all this is for a soldier. You can understand how, from the moment that I became aware of my situation, I resolved to get myself killed as speedily as possible. I set about it at once. A luckier man would have succeeded long ago; but I seem to be bewitched. Neither balls nor bullets will have anything to do with me; it seems as if even swords are afraid of notching themselves upon me. But I never omit an opportunity. You see now why all this passed at table, do you not? Well, we are going to fight. I shall act like a fool, and give every advantage to my opponent;

but it will be of no use. He will draw at fifteen paces, at ten paces, at five paces, or even standing over me; but he will miss me, or his pistol will miss fire, or burn powder without shooting, and I shall lose this fine opportunity, to be taken off some day when I least expect it, — perhaps when I am drawing on my boots! But, hush! here comes my adversary."

In truth, by the same road across the uneven and rocky land which Roland and Sir John had crossed, a party of three were approaching, seeming to grow larger as they drew nearer. Roland counted them. "Three!" he said. "Why three, when we are only two?"

"Oh, I forgot," said the Englishman. "M. de Barjols, as much in your interest as his own, asked permission to bring a surgeon."

"What for?" asked Roland, frowning.

"If one of you should be wounded, bleeding will sometimes save a man's life."

"Sir John," said Roland, almost fiercely, "I do not understand all these delicate points when it comes to a duel. When people fight, it is to kill. If they exchange courtesies beforehand, as your ancestors and mine did at Fontenoy, very well; but when once the swords are out of the scabbards, or the pistols loaded, the life of a man must pay for the pain he has caused. On your word of honor, Sir John, I ask one thing of you: it is that, wounded or killed, living or dead, M. de Barjols's surgeon shall not touch me."

"But, Monsieur Roland —"

"Oh, you may take it or leave it. Your word of honor, my lord, or — devil take me! — I will not fight."

The Englishman looked at his companion in astonishment; his face had become livid, and he trembled as if

with terror. Without understanding what it all meant, Sir John gave his word.

"Very well," said Roland. "This, you see, is another of the effects of this charming malady; it always makes me ill to think of a case of surgical instruments, or to see a knife or a lancet. I turned pale, did I not?"

"I thought for a moment that you were going to faint."

Roland burst out laughing. "It would have been a fine idea," he said, "for our adversaries to arrive and find you occupied in giving me smelling-salts, like a fainting woman. Do you know what they would have said, — and you first of all? They would have said that I was afraid."

The three new-comers had been advancing all this time, and were now within sound of their voices, so that Sir John had no time to reply to Roland. They saluted as they arrived. Roland, smiling, answered the salute. Sir John spoke to him in a low voice.

"You are still a little pale," he said. "Go and take a turn around the fountain; I will come for you when it is time."

"Ah, that 's a good idea," said Roland; "I have always wanted to see this famous fountain of Vaucluse, the Hippocrene of Petrarch. You remember his sonnet, —

"'Chiare, fresche e dolci acque
Ove le belle membra
Pose colei, che sola a me perdona.'

And if I miss this opportunity, I shall perhaps never find another. In which direction is it?"

"You are not thirty steps from it; follow the path, and you will find it at the turn of the road, at the foot of that enormous rock whose summit you see."

"My lord," said Roland, "you are the best cicerone I ever met; thanks." And with a friendly wave of the hand he went away in the direction of the fountain, humming the charming ballad of Philippe Desportes;—

"Rosette, pour un peu d'absence,
Votre cœur vous avez changé;
Et, moi, sachant cette inconstance,
Le mien autre part j'ai rangé.
Jamais plus beauté si légère
Sur moi tant de pouvoir n'aura;
Nous verrons, volage bergère,
Qui premier s'en repentira."

Sir John turned around as he heard the modulations of the fresh and tender voice, which had something almost feminine in its upper notes. His cold and methodical mind could understand nothing of this nervous nature, except that he had before his eyes one of the most astonishing organizations that could be met. The two young men awaited him; the surgeon held himself a little apart.

Sir John carried in his hand his case of pistols; he placed it upon a table-like rock, and drew from his pocket a little key which seemed to have been made by a goldsmith rather than by a locksmith, with which he opened the box. The weapons were magnificent, although perfectly simple; they were from the workshops of Menton, the grandfather of him who to-day is one of the best gunsmiths in London. Sir John handed them for examination to M. de Barjols's second, who tried the springs, and worked the triggers back and forth to see if the action were double or single. They were simple in their action. M. de Barjols glanced at them, but did not touch them.

"Our opponent is not acquainted with your weapons?" inquired M. de Valensolle.

"He has never even seen them," replied Sir John; "I give you my word of honor."

"Oh," said Valensolle, "a simple denial is enough."

In order that there should be no mistake, they detailed once more the conditions of the duel; then, in order to lose as little time as possible in useless preparations, they loaded the pistols, replaced them ready loaded in the box, gave the box to the surgeon; and Sir John, with the key of the box in his pocket, went in search of Roland. He found him talking with a little neatherd who was pasturing three goats on the steep and rocky slope of the mountain. Sir John opened his mouth to tell Roland that everything was ready; but the latter, without giving the Englishman time to speak, said: —

"You don't know what this child is telling me, my lord! It is a veritable legend from the borders of the Rhine. He says that this pool, whose depth no one knows, extends under the mountain for two or three leagues, and is the dwelling-place of a fairy, half woman, half serpent, who on calm summer nights glides upon the surface of the water, calling the shepherds from the mountain, and only showing them her head with its long hair, her naked shoulders, and her beautiful arms. But the fools are deceived by this semblance of a woman. They approach, and sign to her to come to them, while the fairy, on her part, motions to them to come to her. They advance, without noticing where their feet are going; all at once the earth gives way beneath them; the fairy extends her arms, plunges with them into her watery palace, and the next day reappears alone. How the devil can these ignorant shepherds have got hold of the same story that Virgil related in such beautiful verse to Augustus and Mæcenas?" He was silent for an instant, with his eyes fixed upon the deep blue water; then, turning

towards Sir John, he said: "They say that a swimmer, no matter how vigorous he may be, never reappears after plunging into this gulf; if I should take a plunge there, perhaps it would be surer than M. de Barjols's bullet. At all events, it will do as a last resource; in the mean time, let us try for the bullet. Come, my lord, come on." And taking the amazed Englishman's arm, he drew him towards those who were waiting.

In the mean time, these latter had been occupied in searching for a suitable place, and had found one. It was a little plateau, clinging as it were to the steep slope of the mountain, exposed to the setting sun, and containing a ruined château, which served as a refuge for the shepherds when they were overtaken by the mistral. A flat space, about fifty steps long and twenty wide, was to be the theatre of the drama, which was now approaching its *dénoûement*.

"Here we are, gentlemen," said Sir John.

"We are ready, gentlemen," replied M. de Valensolle.

"The adversaries should clearly understand the conditions of the combat," said Sir John. Then addressing M. de Valensolle, he added: "Recite them, Monsieur; you are a Frenchman, and I a foreigner; you will explain them more clearly than I could."

"You are one of those foreigners, my lord, who can teach the language to poor natives of Provence like us; however, since you are courteous enough to yield the place to me, I will obey." And he bowed to Sir John, who returned his salute.

"Gentlemen," continued M. de Barjols's second, "it is understood that you are to be placed forty paces apart; that you walk towards each other; that each one fires when he pleases, and, wounded or not, has the privilege of advancing after his adversary has fired."

The duellists bowed in sign of assent, and, as if with one voice, said at the same moment, —

"The weapons!"

Sir John drew the little key from his pocket, and opened the box. Then he approached M. de Barjols with it. The latter wished to refer the choice of arms to his opponent, but Roland refused with a gesture, saying in a voice of almost feminine sweetness, —

"After you, Monsieur de Barjols. I hear that, although insulted by me, you have renounced every advantage; this is but the least of them, if indeed it can be considered one."

M. de Barjols did not insist further, and took at hazard one of the pistols. Sir John offered the other to Roland, who took it, and without even inspecting it, let it hang carelessly at his side.

In the mean time, M. de Valensolle had been measuring the forty paces; a stick was placed at the starting-point. "Will you measure after me, sir?" he asked Sir John.

"It is needless," replied the other; "M. de Montrevel and I are perfectly willing to trust to you."

M. de Valensolle put in a second stick at the fortieth step. "Gentlemen," said he, "all is ready."

Roland's opponent was already at his post, with his hat and coat off. The surgeon and the two seconds stood at one side. The place had been so well chosen that there was no advantage of ground or sunlight for either. Roland threw down his coat and hat, and placed himself opposite M. de Barjols, forty paces away. They both, the one from the right and the other from the left, looked out over the same horizon.

The prospect was in harmony with the terrible solemnity of the scene. There was nothing to be seen at Ro-

land's right nor at M. de Barjols's left; the mountain descended towards them with the steep slope of a gigantic roof. But on the opposite side, at M. de Barjols's right and Roland's left, it was quite another thing. The horizon seemed boundless. In the foreground was the reddish plain, pierced on all sides by the points of rocks, like a cemetery of Titans whose bones protruded through the earth. Behind this, vividly outlined against the setting sun, lay Avignon, with its girdle of walls and its gigantic palace, which, like a crouching lion, seemed to hold the city panting beneath its claws. Beyond Avignon a luminous line, like a river of molten gold, showed the Rhone. Finally, beyond the Rhone rose the blue line of the hills which separate Avignon from Nismes and d'Uzes. Back of all, the sun, at which one of these men was in all probability gazing for the last time, was sinking slowly and majestically into an ocean of purple and gold.

The two men formed a strange contrast. One, with his black hair, bronzed complexion, thin limbs, and gloomy eye, was the type of that southern race which counts among its ancestors Greeks, Romans, Arabs, and Spaniards. The other, with his rosy complexion, blond hair, large blue eyes, and hands as plump as a woman's, was the type of that race of the temperate clime which is descended from the Gauls, the Germans, and the Normans.

It would have been easy to fancy that this was not merely a duel between two individuals. One might have believed it to be a struggle of one people against another people, of one race against another, of the South against the North. Was it some such idea as this which occupied Roland's mind and plunged him in melancholy revery? It is not probable. To tell the truth, he seemed

to forget seconds, duel, and adversary, so absorbed was he in the splendid sight before him. M. de Barjols's voice withdrew him from his abstraction.

"When you are ready, sir, I am," he said.

Roland started. "I beg your pardon for having made you wait, sir," he said. "You must excuse my absent-mindedness; I am ready." And with a smile upon his lips, and his hair ruffled by the evening breeze, as if he had been taking an ordinary stroll, while his adversary on the contrary took every precaution customary upon such occasions, Roland walked straight towards M. de Barjols.

Sir John's face, in contrast to his ordinary immobility, betrayed deep distress. The distance between the two adversaries rapidly diminished. M. de Barjols stopped first, took aim, and fired, when Roland was not more than ten steps from him. The ball cut a curl from Roland's head, but did not harm him.

The young man turned towards his second. "What did I tell you?" he said.

"Fire, Monsieur, fire!" said the seconds.

M. de Barjols remained silent and motionless in the place where he had fired.

"Your pardon, gentlemen," replied Roland; "you will permit me. I hope to be the best judge of the time and manner in which I shall retaliate. After having received M. de Barjols's fire, I can say a few words to him which I could not say before." Then turning towards the young aristocrat, who was pale but calm, he said: "Monsieur, perhaps I was a little hasty in our discussion this morning." And he waited.

"It is your turn to fire, Monsieur," replied De Barjols.

"But," continued Roland, as if he had not heard, "you will now understand the cause, and will perhaps excuse it. I am *aide-de-camp* to General Bonaparte."

"Fire, Monsieur," repeated the young noble.

"Say but a single word of retractation, Monsieur," continued the young officer; "say that General Bonaparte's reputation for honor and delicacy is such that an Italian proverb, made in a moment of ill-humor by the vanquished, can no longer reflect upon him, — say this, and I will throw this weapon away, and clasp your hand; for I acknowledge that you are a brave man."

"I will never render homage to this reputation for honor and delicacy of which you speak, until your general-in-chief uses the influence which his genius has given him to do what Monk did; in other words, to restore the throne to his legitimate sovereign."

"Ah," said Roland, with a smile, "that is too much to ask of a Republican general."

"Then I hold to what I said," returned the young noble. "Fire, Monsieur." And as Roland did not hasten to obey the injunction, he added, stamping his foot, "By heavens! why don't you fire?"

At these words Roland made a movement as if he were about to fire into the air.

But with a quickness of word and gesture which prevented him from carrying out the idea, M. de Barjols exclaimed, "For Heaven's sake, don't fire into the air, or you will make me insist upon beginning all over again, and giving you the first shot!"

"Upon my honor!" cried Roland, turning as pale as if every drop of blood had left his body, "this is the first time I ever did as much for any man, no matter who he was. Go to the devil, then! and since you will not have life, take death!" And at the same instant, without taking the trouble to aim, he lowered his arm and fired.

Alfred de Barjols put his hand to his chest, swayed for-

ward and back, whirled around, and fell with his face to the earth. Roland's ball had pierced his heart.

Sir John, when he saw De Barjols fall, went straight to Roland and led him towards the place where he had left his hat and coat.

"That is the third," murmured Roland, with a sigh; "but you are a witness that this one would have it." And handing his smoking pistol to Sir John, he put on his coat and hat.

In the mean time, M. de Valensolle had picked up the pistol which had fallen from his friend's hand, and brought it with the box to Sir John.

"Well?" said the Englishman, glancing meaningly towards De Barjols.

"He is dead," replied the second.

"Did I act the part of a man of honor, Monsieur?" asked Roland, wiping away the perspiration which had started out upon his face at the news that his opponent was dead.

"Yes," replied M. de Valensolle; "only, you will permit me to say that you have an unlucky hand." And bowing to Roland and his friend with exquisite politeness, he returned to his friend's corpse.

"And you, my lord, what say you?" asked Roland.

"I say," replied Sir John, with a kind of forced admiration, "that you are one of those men whom Shakspeare makes to say of themselves, 'Danger and I are two lions born on the same day; but I am the elder.'"

CHAPTER V.

ROLAND.

THE return journey was sad and silent; it seemed as if Roland, when he saw his chance of death disappear, lost all his gayety. The catastrophe of which he had just been the cause might well have had something to do with this taciturnity; but Roland on the field of battle, and above all during his last campaign with the Arabs, had too often been obliged to lead his horse over the dead bodies of which he had been the cause to be much impressed by the death of a man who was unknown to him. There was another reason for this sadness. That which the young man had confided to Sir John was nothing more than the truth; he was not feeling regret at the death of another, but disappointment at his own escape.

When they entered the hotel of the Palace-Royal, Sir John went straight to his room to replace his pistols, lest the sight of them might affect Roland with remorse; then he went in search of the young officer, to return to him the three letters which had been confided to him. He found him deep in thought, with his elbows resting upon the table. Without speaking a word, the Englishman laid the three letters before Roland. The young man glanced at the addresses, took up the letter which he had destined for his mother, broke the seal, and read it. As he read, great tears rolled down his cheeks.

Sir John regarded with astonishment this new phase of Roland's character. He would have believed everything to be possible to this versatile nature, except to shed tears which should run silently from the eyes.

Then, shaking his head, without paying the least attention to Sir John's presence, Roland murmured, "Poor Mother! she would have wept. Perhaps it is better as it is; mothers should not weep for their children."

And he mechanically tore up the letters written to his mother, his sister, and General Bonaparte; after which, he carefully burned every piece. Then, summoning the chambermaid, he asked, —

"What is the latest hour that letters can be posted?"

"Half past six," she replied; "you have only a few minutes."

"Wait, then." He took a pen and wrote.

MY DEAR GENERAL, — I told you so; I am living, and he is dead. This looks like a wager. Devoted till death,

Your paladin,

ROLAND.

Then he sealed the letter, addressed it to "General Bonaparte, rue de la Victoire, Paris," and gave it to the chambermaid, telling her not to lose a second in taking it to the post. It was not until then that he noticed Sir John, and held out his hand to him.

"You have done me a great service, my lord," he said, — "one of those which bind men together for all eternity. I am already your friend; will you honor me by becoming mine?"

Sir John pressed the hand which Roland gave him. "Oh," he said, "I thank you very much. I should not have presumed to ask for this honor; but since you offer it, I accept."

And in his turn, the imperturbable Englishman felt a strange softening of the heart, and shook off a tear which trembled upon his eyelashes. Then, looking at Roland, he said, —

"It is unfortunate that you are in such haste to depart; I should like to have spent another day or two with you."

"Where were you going, my lord, when I met you?"

"Oh, nowhere in particular; I was only travelling for amusement. I am very often bored."

"Then you were going nowhere?"

"I was going everywhere."

"It is all the same," replied the young officer, smiling. "Well, will you do something for me?"

"Willingly, if it be possible."

"Perfectly possible; it only depends upon yourself."

"Name it."

"If I had been killed, you were going to take my dead body to my mother, or else throw it into the Rhone."

"I should have taken it to your mother, and not thrown it into the Rhone."

"Well, now, instead of taking me dead, take me living; you will be all the better received."

"Oh!"

"We will stay a fortnight at Bourg. It is my native town, and one of the most tiresome places in France; but as your countrymen are nothing if not original, perhaps you would be amused where others would be bored. Is it agreed?"

"I should like nothing better," replied the Englishman; "but I am afraid it would be rather unceremonious on my part."

"Oh, we are not in England, my lord, where etiquette is an absolute sovereign. We have neither king nor

queen, and we did not cut off the head of the poor creature they called Marie Antoinette to put Her Majesty Etiquette in her place."

"I should like it very much indeed," said Sir John.

"As you will see, my mother is an excellent as well as a distinguished woman. My sister was sixteen when I went away, so she must be eighteen now. She was pretty then, and now she must be beautiful. There is no one else except my brother Edward, a charming little rascal of eleven years, who will set off matches against your legs, and jabber English with you; then at the end of the fortnight we will go to Paris together."

"I have just come from Paris," said the Englishman.

"See here, now! You were ready to go to Egypt to see General Bonaparte; it is not as far from here to Paris as it is to Cairo. I will present you to him; and presented by me, you may rest assured that you will be well received. Then, you spoke of Shakspeare just now."

"Oh, yes, I always speak of him."

"That shows that you like comedies and dramas."

"I am very fond of them."

"Well, General Bonaparte is on the point of presenting one after his own fashion, which will not be lacking in interest, I assure you."

"Then," said Sir John, still hesitating, "you think I may without indiscretion accept your offer?"

"I certainly do; and you would be giving pleasure to every one, myself included."

"Then I accept."

"Bravo! and now, how soon can you go?"

"As soon as you like. My carriage was already harnessed when you threw that unfortunate plate at M. de Barjols's head; but as I should never have known you

if it had not been for the plate, I am very glad that you threw it, — yes, very glad."

"Shall we go this evening?"

"This instant. I will go and tell the postilion to send some one with more horses, and as soon as they arrive, we will start."

Roland made a sign of assent.

Sir John went down to give his orders, and came up again to say that he had had two chops and a fried chicken served. Roland took his valise and descended. The Englishman put his pistols into the box of his carriage. They both ate a little, in order to be able to travel all night without stopping; and as nine o'clock struck from the Church of the Cordeliers, they settled themselves in the carriage and departed from Avignon, where their presence had left a new stain of blood, — Roland going with characteristic carelessness, and Sir John with the impassibility of his nation. A quarter of an hour afterwards they were asleep, if one might judge by the silence upon both sides.

We will profit by this moment of repose to give our readers a little indispensable information concerning Roland and his family.

Roland was born on the 1st of July, 1773, four years and some days after Bonaparte, at whose side, or rather in attendance upon whom, he made his appearance in this book. He was the son of Charles de Montrevel, the colonel of a regiment which was for a long time quartered at Martinique, where the colonel married a Creole named Clotilde de la Clemencière. Three children were born of this marriage, two boys and a girl, — Louis, whose acquaintance we have already madeunder the name of Roland; Amélie, whose beauty had been spoken of by the latter to Sir John; and Edward.

Recalled to France about 1782 M. de Montrevel had obtained admission for young Louis de Montrevel to the military school of Paris. (We shall see later how he exchanged his name of Louis for that of Roland.) Louis was the youngest of the pupils. Although he was only thirteen years old, he had already attracted notice by his fearless and quarrelsome character, of which, seventeen years later, he gave an example at the *table d'hôte* at Avignon.

Bonaparte, although he was also only a child, possessed the good points of this character, — in other words, while he was not quarrelsome, he was positive, headstrong, fearless; he recognized in the child some of the qualities which he himself possessed, and this similarity of sentiments made him pardon his faults, and attach him to himself. For his part, the child, realizing the strength of the young Corsican, leaned upon him.

One day the boy sought his great friend, as he called Napoleon, at a moment when the latter was absorbed in the solution of a mathematical problem. He knew the importance which the future artillery officer attached to this science, which had up to that time won for him his greatest, or rather his sole conquests. He remained standing beside him, without moving.

The young mathematician was aware of the presence of the child, but buried himself still deeper in his problem, from which, at the end of ten minutes, he emerged victorious. Then he turned towards his young comrade with that inner satisfaction which is felt by a man when he wins a victory, no matter of what nature. The boy was standing, pale, with clenched teeth, stiffened arms, and closed fists.

"Oh, ho!" said young Bonaparte, "what's the matter now?"

"Valence, the governor's nephew, has struck me."

"Ah," said Bonaparte, laughing, "and do you want me to hit him back?"

The boy shook his head. "No," he said; "I have come to you because I want to fight."

"With Valence?"

"Yes."

"But Valence will be too much for you, my child; he is four times as strong as you."

"But I don't want to fight him as children fight, but as men fight."

"Bah!"

"Does that astonish you?" asked the boy.

"No," said Bonaparte; "with what do you want to fight?"

"With swords."

"But the sergeants have the swords, and they would never lend them to you."

"We can get along without swords."

"With what will you fight, then?"

The boy pointed to the compasses with which the young mathematician had just been working out his problem.

"Oh, my child," said Bonaparte, "compasses would make a very ugly wound."

"So much the better," replied Louis. "I shall kill him."

"And if he should kill you?"

"I would rather die than endure his blow."

Bonaparte insisted no longer; he delighted in courage, and that of his young companion pleased him. "Very well, then," he said; "I will tell Valence that you want to fight with him, but not until to-morrow."

"Why to-morrow?"

"You will have the night for reflection."

"And from now until to-morrow," replied the boy, "Valence will think that I am a coward." Then, shaking his head, he said, "It is too long from now until to-morrow;" and he turned to go.

"Where are you going?" asked Bonaparte.

"I am going to ask some one else to be my friend."

"Then I am no longer your friend?"

"You are one no longer, because you believe me to be a coward."

"Very well," said the young man, rising.

"You will go?"

"I will go."

"Now?"

"Now."

"Ah," cried the child, "I beg your pardon! you are always my friend!" And he fell upon his neck weeping. They were the first tears which he had shed since he had received the blow.

Bonaparte found Valence, and gravely explained the mission with which he was charged.

Valence was a tall fellow of seventeen, who by reason of a beard and mustaches looked as if he were twenty. He was, besides, cooler than the one whom he had insulted. He replied that Louis had pulled his queue (they wore queues at that time) as if it were a bell-rope; that he had told him twice not to do it again, but that Louis had come back the third time; and that then, seeing in him only a mischievous boy, he had treated him accordingly.

Valence's reply was carried to Louis, who said that pulling a queue was sport, but that giving a blow was insult. Obstinacy gave to the child of thirteen the logic of a man of thirty.

The modern Popilius returned to carry war to Valence.

The young man was in an embarrassing position. He could not fight with a child, under pain of ridicule; if he fought and was wounded, it would be odious; and if he gave a wound, he should never forgive himself. However, Louis's obstinacy, which did not diminish, gave gravity to the situation. They assembled a council of the seniors, as was done on serious occasions.

The council of seniors decided that one of their number could not fight with a child; but that as the boy obstinately persisted in regarding himself as a man, Valence should say to him before all his companions that he was sorry to have treated him as a child, and that henceforth he would look upon him as a young man.

They went for Louis, who was waiting in his friend's room, and brought him into the midst of the circle which the young pupils had formed in the court. There Valence, to whom his comrades had dictated a speech which had been the subject of much deliberation among them, declared to Louis that he exceedingly regretted what had happened; that he had treated him according to his age, and not according to his intelligence and courage; and begged him to excuse his hasty action, and to shake hands, in token that all was forgotten.

But Louis shook his head. "My father, who is a colonel, said one day," he replied, "that he who received a blow and did not fight was a coward. The first time I see my father, I am going to ask him if he who gives the blow and then makes excuses in order not to fight is not more of a coward than the other."

The young men looked at one another; but the general sentiment had been against a duel which would be nothing more than an assassination, and they, Bonaparte included, unanimously assured the child that he ought to be content

with what Valence had said, and that his words had expressed the general opinion.

Louis went away, pale with anger, and sulky with his great friend, who, he said, had sacrificed the interests of his honor.

The next day, at a mathematical recitation of the seniors, Louis glided into the schoolroom; and while Valence was at the blackboard, he approached him before any one noticed it, mounted a stool in order to reach up to his face, and returned the blow which he had received on the previous evening.

"There," he said, "now we are quits, and I have your apologies besides; for I shall never make any to you, you may be sure of that."

The scandal was great; this had taken place in the presence of the professor, who was obliged to report it to the head of the school, the Marquis Tiburce Valence.

The latter, who knew nothing of the previous blow, had the culprit brought before him, and after a terrible reprimand announced to him that he could no longer belong to the school, and that he must that very day be ready to return to Bourg, to his mother.

Louis replied that he would be ready in ten minutes, and that in a quarter of an hour he would leave the school. Of the blow which he had himself received, he said not a word.

His reply sounded impertinent to Marquis Tiburce Valence; he was tempted to put the insolent boy under arrest for a week, but he could not arrest him and expel him at the same time. A person was detailed to watch the boy until he should be safely in the train; Mme. de Montrevel was to be notified to meet her son on his arrival.

Bonaparte met the boy, who was followed by his guard, and asked an explanation.

"I would tell you if you were still my friend," replied the boy; "but you are not. Why do you disturb yourself about what happens to me?"

Bonaparte motioned to the guard; and the latter, while Louis put his little possessions together, came and talked to him at the door. He learned then that the boy had been turned out of the school. It was a serious business, — one that would blast the hopes of a whole family, and perhaps ruin the future of his young comrade. With that rapidity of decision which was one of his characteristics, he demanded an audience with the marquis, meanwhile telling the guard not to hasten Louis's departure.

Bonaparte was an excellent pupil, much loved in the school, and much esteemed by Marquis Tiburce Valence; his request was instantly granted. He related to the governor all that had passed, and, without blaming Valence in the least, he endeavored to exonerate Louis.

"Is this true, sir, which you have just told me?" demanded the governor.

"You can ask your nephew himself; he will tell you the truth."

They sent for Valence; he had just heard of Louis's expulsion, and was on his way to relate to his uncle what had passed. His story agreed in every particular with that of Bonaparte.

"Very well," said the governor. "Louis shall not go; you may go instead; you are old enough to leave the school." Then, ringing, he said, "Let them send me the table of vacant sub-lieutenancies."

The same day a sub-lieutenancy was asked for in hot haste, and that very evening Valence set out to join his regiment. He went to say good-by to Louis, who endured his embrace half willingly, half in spite of himself, while Bonaparte held his hands.

"It is all very well now," said the boy; "but if we ever meet again, and each of us has a sword by his side —" A menacing gesture finished the phrase. Valence went away.

On the 10th of October, 1785, Bonaparte received his own brevet of sub-lieutenant; his was one of the fifty-eight that Louis XVI. signed for the military school. Eleven years later, on the 15th of November, 1796, Bonaparte, general-in-chief of the army of Italy, at the head of the bridge of Arcole, which was defended by two regiments of Croates and two pieces of artillery, seeing shot and shell decimating his ranks, feeling victory waver beneath his hands, and alarmed at the hesitation of the bravest, tore from the stiffened fingers of a corpse a tri-colored flag, and darted upon the bridge, crying: "Soldiers, are you no longer the men of Lodi?" when he saw that he was preceded by a young lieutenant who protected him with his body. This did not suit Bonaparte; he wanted to be first; he would have liked, had it been possible, to have gone alone. He seized the young man by his coat-tail, and drew him back.

"Citizen," he said, "you are only a lieutenant, and I am general-in-chief. I must go first."

"You are right," replied the other; and he followed Bonaparte instead of preceding him.

In the evening, when he learned that two Austrian divisions had been completely destroyed, when he saw the two thousand prisoners that he had made, and counted the captured artillery and flags, Bonaparte remembered the young lieutenant who had preceded him at a moment when he had thought that nothing but death was before him.

"Berthier," he said, "tell my *aide-de-camp* Valence to

go and look for a young lieutenant of grenadiers whom I noticed this morning on the bridge of Arcole."

"General," stammered Berthier, "Valence is wounded."

"That 's a fact; I have not seen him to-day. Wounded, is he? Where, how, — on the field of battle?"

"No, General; he had a quarrel yesterday, and received a sword-thrust in his chest."

Bonaparte frowned. "Every one around me knows that I do not like duels; the blood of a soldier belongs not to himself, but to France. Give the order to Muiron, then."

"He is killed, General."

"Then to Elliot."

"Killed also."

Bonaparte drew a handkerchief from his pocket, and passed it over his forehead, which was wet with perspiration. "To whom you will, then; but I want to see that lieutenant." He dared name no one else, for fear of hearing again the fatal words, "He is killed."

A quarter of an hour later, the young lieutenant was brought to his tent. The lamp gave only a feeble light.

"Advance, Lieutenant," said Bonaparte.

The young man took three steps, and entered the circle of light.

"Are you the one," continued Bonaparte, "who tried to precede me this morning?"

"It was a wager, General," replied the young lieutenant, gayly, in a voice that made the general tremble.

"And I made you lose it?"

"Perhaps so; perhaps not."

"And what was this wager?"

"That I should be promoted to the rank of captain to-day."

"You have won."

"Thanks, General."

The young man darted forward as if to clasp Bonaparte's hand, and then suddenly made a movement backwards. The light had shone upon his face for an instant, and that instant had been enough for the general to notice his countenance, as he had already noticed his voice. Neither was unknown to him. He sought for an instant in his memory, but finding it treacherous he said, —

"I know you."

"That is very possible, General."

"It is very certain; but I do not remember your name."

"You have so conducted yourself, General, that your own cannot be forgotten."

"Who are you?"

"Ask Valence, General."

Bonaparte uttered a cry of joy. "Louis de Montrevel," he said; and he opened his arms.

This time the young lieutenant did not hesitate to throw himself into them.

"That 's all right," said Bonaparte. "You will serve for a week in your new rank, so that we may get used to seeing you with a captain's epaulettes, and then you shall take my poor Muiron's place as *aide-de-camp*. Go!"

"Once more," said the young man, making a gesture as if to open his arms.

"Ah, yes, indeed," said Bonaparte, joyously. And holding him close after embracing him a second time, he asked, "Was it you, then, who wounded Valence?"

"Zounds! General," said the young man, "you were there when I promised it to him. A soldier must keep his word."

A week later, Captain Montrevel took the position of

ordnance officer near the general-in-chief, who had replaced his given name of Louis, in bad odor just then, by the one of Roland; and the young man consoled himself for being no longer the descendant of Saint Louis by becoming the nephew of Charlemagne.

Roland, — no one thought of calling Captain Montrevel Louis after Bonaparte had baptized him Roland, — Roland went through the Italian campaign with the general-in-chief, and returned with him to Paris after the peace of Campo Formio.

When the expedition to Egypt was decided upon, Roland, who had been recalled to his mother by the death of the General of Brigade de Montrevel, who had been killed on the Rhine while his son was fighting on the Adige and the Mincio, was one of the first of those designed by the commander-in-chief to take a high rank in the useless but poetical crusade which he contemplated. He left his mother, his sister Amélie, and his young brother Edward at Bourg, his father's native city. They inhabited, at Noirès-Fontaines, three quarters of a league from the town, a charming house which they called a château, and which with a farm and a few hundred acres of land around it formed the entire fortune of the general, amounting to about six or eight thousand livres of income.

The departure of Roland upon this venturesome expedition was a great grief to the widow. The death of the father seemed to be an omen of that of the son; and Mme. de Montrevel, a sweet and tender Creole, was not a Spartan mother. Bonaparte, who loved his old comrade of the military school with all his heart, had permitted him to join the army at the last moment at Toulon. But the fear of arriving too late had prevented Roland from taking full benefit of this permission. He left his mother

with a promise he could not keep, — namely, not to expose himself to danger except in case of absolute necessity; and he arrived at Marseilles a week before the fleet set sail.

It is not our intention to relate in detail the campaign in Egypt, any more than that of Italy. We will mention only that which is absolutely necessary to a proper understanding of this story, and of the development of Roland's character. On the 19th of May, 1798, Bonaparte and his army set sail for the East; on the 15th of June the chevaliers of Malta gave up to him the keys of their citadel. On the 2d of July the army disembarked at Marabout; on the same day, it took Alexandria; on the 25th Bonaparte entered Cairo, after having defeated the Mamelukes at Chebreiss and at the Pyramids.

During this succession of marches and battles Roland had been as we have seen him, lively and courageous, braving the devouring heats of the day and the icy dews of the nights, and throwing himself like a hero or a fool amidst Turkish sabres or Bedouin balls. During the forty days that had been occupied by the transit, he had scarcely left the interpreter's side; and he had thus learned not only to understand Arabic, but to make himself understood. It often happened, therefore, that when the general did not care to have recourse to the regular interpreter, Roland was charged with communications to mufti, ulema, or sheik.

During the night of the 20th and 21st of October, Cairo revolted; at five o'clock in the morning General Dupuy died at the point of a lance; at eight o'clock in the morning, when the insurrection seemed to be getting under control, an *aide-de-camp* of the dead general came in haste to announce that the Bedouins from the outlying

country were menacing Bab-el-Nasr, or the gate of la Victoire.

Bonaparte was breakfasting with his *aide-de-camp* Sulkowsky, who had been seriously wounded at Salahieh, and who was scarcely able to leave his bed. Bonaparte, in his preoccupation, forgot the young Pole's condition.

"Sulkowsky," he said, "take fifteen guides, and go and see what this rabble want of us."

Sulkowsky arose.

"General," said Roland, "permit me to execute this commission. My comrade can scarcely stand."

"You are right," said Bonaparte; "go!"

Roland went out, procured fifteen guides, and started.

But the order had been given to Sulkowsky, and Sulkowsky was determined to execute it himself. He also started out, with five or six men whom he found ready.

Either by chance, or because he knew the roads out of Cairo better than Roland did, he arrived at the gate of la Victoire a few moments before him.

When Roland got there, he discovered that the Arabs were in the act of carrying away an officer; the five or six men were already killed. Sometimes Arabs, while massacring the common soldiers, will spare the officers in hopes of ransom. Roland recognized Sulkowsky. He pointed him out with his sabre to his fifteen men, and then charged at a gallop, — Half an hour later, one of the guides returned alone to the general's quarters, and announced that Sulkowsky, Roland, and his twenty-one companions had all been killed.

Bonaparte, as we have said, loved Roland as a brother or a son; he questioned the guide, with a view to learning all the details of the catastrophe. The guide had seen an Arab cut off Sulkowsky's head and attach it to

his saddle-bow. As for Roland, his horse had been killed under him. He had disengaged himself from the stirrups, and fought for a moment on foot, but had been lost sight of in a discharge of musketry, almost at the very last.

Bonaparte sighed, and murmured with a tear "Another one!" Then he seemed to think no more about it. However, he ascertained the name of the tribe of Bedouin Arabs who had carried off two that were dearest to him. He learned that it was a tribe of unsubdued Arabs, whose village lay at a distance of about ten leagues. Bonaparte let them alone for a month, in order that they might feel themselves perfectly secure; at the end of that time he ordered one of his *aides-de-camp*, named Croisier, to take a detachment, surround the village, destroy the huts, cut off the heads of the men, and bring them in sacks to Cairo; and with them the remainder of the population, — namely, the women and children.

Croisier and his men executed the order promptly; they brought to Cairo all the women and children that they could capture, and with them a live Arab, bound fast to a horse.

"Why did you bring this living man?" demanded Bonaparte; "I told you to cut off the head of every man capable of bearing arms."

"General," replied Croisier, who understood a smattering of Arabic, "just as I was about to cut off this man's head I managed to make out that he was offering to exchange his life for that of a prisoner. I thought that there was plenty of time to cut off his head, so I brought him along. If I have made a mistake, the ceremony can take place here instead of yonder; that's all the difference."

The interpreter Ventura was sent for, and he questioned the Bedouin. The man replied that he had saved the

life of a French officer who had been seriously wounded at the gate of la Victoire; that this officer, who spoke a little Arabic, had called himself *aide-de-camp* to General Bonaparte; that he had sent him to his brother, who practised medicine in a neighboring tribe; that the officer was a prisoner in this tribe, and that if they would promise him his life he would write to his brother to send the prisoner to Cairo.

This might be only a story to gain time; but on the other hand there might be some truth in it. At all events, nothing would be risked by waiting. The Arab was placed under guard, and provided with a *thaleb*, who wrote at his dictation a letter which he sealed with his own seal. An Arab from Cairo then departed to negotiate. If the negotiator succeeded, it meant life for the Bedouin, and five hundred piastres for the Arab. Three days later the man returned with Roland.

Bonaparte had hoped for this result, but had not dared to believe in it. His heart of bronze, which had seemed insensible to grief, leaped with joy. He took Roland in his arms, as upon the day when he had found him again, and two tears — two pearls, for Bonaparte's tears were rare — ran from his eyes.

As for Roland, there was something strange about him. He remained gloomy in the midst of the rejoicing at his return; he confirmed the Arab's story, and requested the man's release; but he refused to give any personal details as to the manner in which he had been taken by the Bedouins and how he had been treated during his captivity. As for Sulkowsky, he had been captured and decapitated under his very eyes, and there was nothing more to be done for him. Roland resumed his duties, as a matter of habit; but it was remarked that what had formerly been courage with him had become recklessness; that what had been

a longing for glory appeared now to be a desire for death. On the other hand, as often happens to those who brave fire and steel, they seemed to avoid him miraculously; before and behind him, and at both sides, men fell, but he remained standing, invulnerable as the demon of war himself.

At the time of the campaign in Syria, two messengers were sent to summon Djezzar-Pacha to surrender Saint-Jean d'Acre. The two messengers never returned; they had had their heads cut off. A third one had to be sent. Roland insisted upon going, and gained the permission of the general-in-chief. He went, and returned safely. He took part in each of the nineteen assaults upon the fortress; at each assault he was seen to enter at the breach. He was one of the ten men who penetrated into the Maudite tower; nine remained there, but he returned without a scratch.

During the retreat, Bonaparte ordered the remnant of cavalry to give up their horses to the sick and wounded. There was much reluctance to lend horses to those who were suffering from the plague. Roland, however, gave his horse to these from choice. Three fell from it dead; he mounted after them, and arrived at Cairo safe and sound. At Aboukir he threw himself into the midst of the *mêlée*, penetrated to the pacha, forcing his way through the circle of blacks who surrounded him, and took him by the beard, braving the fire of his two pistols, of which one burned the powder only; the ball from the other passed under his arm, and killed a guide behind him.

When Bonaparte resolved to return to France, Roland was one of the first to whom he communicated the decision. Any one else would have received the intelligence with joy; but Roland only said, —

"I would have preferred to remain here, General. There are more opportunities for being killed."

However, it would have been an act of ingratitude not to have accompanied his chief, and Roland followed him. During the whole journey he remained gloomy and taciturn. It was only when they reached the waters of Corsica, and came in sight of the English fleet, that he became once more animated. Bonaparte had declared to Admiral Ganteaume that he would fight to the death, and that he would blow up the ship rather than lower his colors.

They passed through the midst of the fleet without being seen, and on the 8th of October, 1799, landed at Fréjus. Every one was eager to be the first to touch the soil of France. Roland was the last to do so.

The general-in-chief seemed to pay no attention to these details, but not one escaped him. He sent Eugène, Berthier, Bourrienne, his *aides-de-camp* and his suite, by the road to Gap and Draguignan. He himself took, *incognito*, the road to Aix, in order to judge for himself the state of the South, keeping only Roland with him. Hoping that the sight of his family would dissipate this mysterious melancholy, the general announced to him, upon arriving at Aix, that he would leave him at Lyons, and allow him three weeks' leave, as a pleasure for himself and a surprise for his mother and sister.

Roland replied: "Thanks, General; my mother and sister will be very glad to see me again."

Formerly he would have replied: "Thanks, General; I shall be very glad to see my mother and sister again."

We have seen what passed at Avignon; we have seen with what profound scorn of danger and with what bitter disgust of life Roland went forth to a terrible duel. We have heard the reason which he gave to Sir John to

account for his carelessness in the face of death. Was the reason good or bad, true or false? Sir John was obliged to content himself with it, for Roland was not disposed to give him another.

And now, as we have said, they both slept, or seemed to sleep, while they were carried rapidly by two galloping post-horses over the road between Avignon and Orange.

CHAPTER VI.

MORGAN.

With the reader's permission, we will leave Roland and Sir John for a while, so comfortably situated that they need cause us no uneasiness, and turn our attention to a person who has thus far scarcely appeared in this story, but who nevertheless is destined to play an important part in it. We mean the man who came, masked and armed, into the dining-room of the hotel at Avignon, to bring back to Jean Picot the two hundred louis which had been stolen from him by mistake, under the impression that they were government money.

As we have seen, the audacious bandit, who called himself Morgan, came to Avignon masked and on horseback in broad daylight. When he went into the hotel he left his horse at the door; and as if the animal enjoyed the same liberty as his master, in the pontifical and royalist town, he found him waiting when he came out, and unfastening him, leaped upon his back, went out through the gate of Oulle, skirted the walls at a gallop, and disappeared on the road to Lyons. But when he was a quarter of a league away from Avignon, he drew his cloak closely around him, to conceal his weapons, and taking off his mask, slipped it into his pocket.

Those whom he had left at Avignon in such doubt as to what this terrible Morgan, the terror of the South, could be, might then, if they had happened to be on the road from Avignon to Bédarides, have seen with their

own eyes whether the appearance of the bandit was as terrible as his reputation. There is no doubt that the features which would then have been disclosed to their view would have accorded so little with their preconceived ideas, that their astonishment would have been extreme.

In fact, the mask, which had been removed by a white and delicate hand, had disclosed the face of a young man not more than twenty four or five years of age, who, by the regularity of his features and the sweetness of his expression, might almost have passed for a woman. One detail alone gave to his face, at certain moments, a strange firmness; under the beautiful blond hair which, after the fashion of the time, floated over his forehead and temples, he had eyebrows, eyes, and lashes as black as ebony. The remainder of the face, as we have said, was almost feminine. It was composed of two little ears, of which only the extremities could be seen under the tufts of hair which the wits of the period had dubbed "dogs' ears;" of a straight and perfectly proportioned nose; of a mouth which, though rather large, was rosy and always smiling, disclosing thereby a double row of admirable teeth; and of a clear-cut and delicate chin, whose bluish tint showed that the beard, had it been allowed to grow, would have presented the same strange contrast to the hair, for it would have been of the most pronounced black.

As for the figure of the unknown, that had been clearly visible as he entered the dining-room at Avignon. It was tall, well proportioned, and flexible; and although it did not denote great muscular force, it showed extraordinary agility. The manner in which he sat his horse showed him to be an accomplished equestrian.

With his cloak thrown back over his shoulder, his mask hidden in its folds, and his hat pulled well down over his eyes, the unknown resumed the rapid pace which

he had for the moment abandoned, crossed Bédarides at a gallop, and when he came to the first houses of Orange, entered a great gate, which immediately closed behind him. A servant was waiting, who sprang at once to the horse's bridle. The rider leaped swiftly to the ground.

"Is your master here?" he asked.

"No, Monsieur le Baron," replied the servant. "He was obliged to go away last night; and if Monsieur came, I was to say to him that my master was on business connected with the company."

"Very well, Baptiste. I have brought back his horse in good condition, except that he is rather tired. You must bathe him with wine, and for two or three days you had better give him barley instead of oats. He has made something like forty leagues since yesterday morning."

"Was Monsieur le Baron pleased with him?"

"Much pleased. Is the carriage ready?"

"All harnessed, and waiting in the coach-house. The postilion is taking a drink with Julien. It was thought better to keep him away from the house, so that he should not see Monsieur's arrival."

"He thinks, then, that it is your master whom he is to take with him?"

"Yes; here is my master's passport, which was used when the horses were engaged; and as my master has gone to Bordeaux with Monsieur le Baron's passport, and as Monsieur le Baron is going to Geneva with my master's passport, it is probable that the skein of thread will be so finely tangled that the damned police, no matter how clever their fingers are, will have some trouble in straightening it out."

"Unfasten that valise from the saddle, Baptiste, and give it to me."

Baptiste undertook to obey, but the valise almost slipped from his hands. "Ah," he laughed, "Monsieur did not warn me. What the devil! Monsieur le Baron does not seem to have wasted his time."

"You are mistaken there, Baptiste. If I did not lose all my time, I at least lost a great deal. I must make up for it now as rapidly as possible."

"Won't Monsieur stop long enough to have some breakfast?"

"I will eat a little, but I cannot spare much time."

"Monsieur will not be delayed. It is now two o'clock in the afternoon, and breakfast has been waiting ever since ten o'clock this morning. Luckily it was a cold breakfast to start with."

And Baptiste hastened to do the honors of the house in his master's absence, by showing the way to the dining-room.

"There is no need of that," remarked the guest; "I know the way perfectly well. You had better go and see about the carriage. Have it at the entrance, with the door open, so that I can get in quickly, before the postilion sees me. Here is money to pay him for the first stage of the journey."

And the stranger who had been addressed as baron gave a handful of paper money to Baptiste.

"But, Monsieur," expostulated the latter, "here is enough to pay for the whole journey to Lyons."

"Pay as far as Valence, under pretext that I want to sleep. You may keep the rest for your trouble."

"Shall I put your valise in the carriage?"

"I will put it there myself."

And taking the valise from the servant's hands, without appearing to notice its weight, he went towards the dining-room, while Baptiste went in the direction of the

neighboring wineshop, putting his money in order as he went.

As the stranger had said, the way was familiar to him, for he turned down a passage without hesitation, and opened first one door and then another. When he had opened the last one, he saw a table elegantly served. A fowl, two partridges, a cold ham, several kinds of cheese, a dessert composed of luscious fruits, and two carafes containing wine, one the color of ruby and the other like topaz, comprised a breakfast which, although it was evidently intended for one, as only one cover was laid, would, upon occasion, have sufficed for three or four.

The first care of the young man, when he entered the dining-room, was to go straight to a mirror, take off his hat, and arrange his hair with the aid of a little comb which he drew from his pocket. After which he went to a basin of faïence, took up a napkin which seemed to have been provided for the purpose, and washed his face and hands. It was only after these details had been scrupulously attended to, that he finally placed himself at the table.

A few minutes sufficed to satisfy an appetite to which fatigue and youth had lent tremendous proportions; and when Baptiste appeared to announce that the carriage was ready, he found him standing, as if expecting the summons.

The stranger pulled his hat over his eyes, wrapped his cloak around him, and put his valise under his arm ; and as Baptiste had taken care that the carriage step should be brought close to the door, he sprang into the carriage without having been seen by the postilion.

Baptiste shut the door upon him; then, addressing the postilion, he said, —

"You have been paid as far as Valence for post and guides, have n't you?"

"Yes; do you want a receipt?" returned the other, grinning.

"No; but M. le Marquis de Ribier, my master, does not want to be disturbed before he gets to Valence."

"All right!" replied the postilion. "We won't disturb the citizen marquis. Come, get up!"

And he started up his horses with an eloquent crack of the whip which seemed to say, "Look out, there, or it will be the worse for you. My passenger is a man who can afford to pay well, and he can ride over the rest of you!"

Once in the carriage, the counterfeit Marquis de Ribier opened the windows, lowered the blinds, raised the stuffed seat, put his valise into the box, sat down again, wrapped his cloak around him, and sure of not being disturbed until he reached Valence, went to sleep as he had breakfasted, with the healthy appetite of youth.

The journey from Orange to Valence is made in eight hours. Just before they entered the town the traveller awoke. He cautiously raised a blind, and saw that he was going through the little town of Paillasse. It was night. He struck his repeater, and found that it was eleven o'clock. Not thinking it worth while to go to sleep again, he counted up the posts to be paid as far as Lyons, and prepared his money.

When the postilion from Valence approached his comrade, whose place he was about to take, the traveller heard the latter say; "He 's one of the old timers; but he is recommended from Orange, and since he pays twenty sous for guides, we must treat him like a patriot."

"All right," responded the man from Valence, "we will treat him like one."

The traveller, deeming that the proper moment for interfering had arrived, raised his blind.

"And you will do me no more than justice," he said. "A patriot! I am proud to call myself one, and a first-rate one, too; and in proof of it, take this and drink the health of the Republic." And he gave a note for a hundred francs to the postilion who had recommended him to the good offices of the other. Then, seeing that the latter looked greedily at the slip of paper, he said: "Here is as much for you, if you will say to the others what has just been said to you."

"Oh, don't worry, citizen," replied the man; "there is only one order to be given from here to Lyons, — Hurry!"

"And here is the money in advance for the sixteen posts, including the double post of entrance. I pay twenty sous for guides; you can arrange that among yourselves."

The postilion bestrode his horse, and set off at a gallop.

While they were waiting for fresh horses, a man dressed as a porter, who, with his wooden frame on his back, was seated upon a stone, rose, approached the carriage, and said a few words to the young companion of Jehu which appeared to cause the latter great astonishment.

"Are you sure of it?" he asked.

"I tell you that I saw him with my own eyes," replied the man.

"Then I can announce this to our friends as certain?"

"You may; only make haste."

"Have they been notified at Servas?"

"Yes; you will find a horse ready between Servas and Sue."

The postilion approached; the young man exchanged a

last look with the porter, who hastened away as if he were the bearer of an urgent message.

"What road, citizen?" asked the postilion.

"The road to Bourg; I must be at Servas at nine o'clock in the evening. I will pay thirty sous for guides."

"Fourteen leagues in five hours is pretty hard, but it can be done."

"Will it be done?"

"We will try;" and the postilion started his horses at a gallop.

As nine o'clock was striking, they entered Servas.

"Six livres for you if you will not change horses, and will take me half way on the road to Sue!" called the young man through the door.

"All right!" replied the postilion. And the carriage passed the post-house without stopping.

An eighth of a league from Servas, Morgan stopped the carriage, put his head out of the door, brought his hands together, and imitated the cry of the screech-owl. The imitation was so good, that a screech-owl answered him from the neighboring wood.

"This is the place!" cried Morgan.

The postilion checked his horses. "If this is the place," he said, "there is no need of going any farther."

The young man took his valise, opened the door, got out, and approaching the postilion, said: "Here are the six livres I promised you."

The postilion took the piece of money, screwed it into his eye, and kept it there, as a young exquisite of our day secures his eyeglass. Morgan guessed that this pantomime had some significance.

"Well," he said, "what do you mean by that?"

"That means," replied the postilion, "that it is no use; I can still see with one eye."

"I understand," replied the young man, laughing; "and if I stop up the other eye?"

"*Dame!* then I could n't see a thing!"

"Here is a droll fellow, who would rather be blind than one-eyed! However, there is no accounting for tastes; there!" And he gave him a second piece of money. The postilion put it in the other eye, turned the carriage around, and set off on the road to Servas.

The companion of Jehu waited until he was lost to sight in the obscurity, and then, putting to his mouth a drilled key, he drew from it a prolonged and trembling sound, like a boatswain's whistle. A similar sound replied to him, and at the same time, a rider came out from the woods, and approached at a gallop. At sight of the horseman, Morgan once more covered his face with the mask.

"In whose name do you come?" demanded the rider, whose face was completely shaded under the broad-brimmed hat that he wore.

"In the name of the prophet Elisha," replied the young masked man.

"Then you are the one I expect;" and he dismounted.

"Are you a prophet, or a disciple?" asked Morgan.

"I am a disciple," replied the new-comer.

"And your master, where is he?"

"You will find him at the charter-house of Seillon."

"Do you know how many companions are gathered there this evening?"

"Twelve."

"It is well; if you meet any others, send them to the *rendezvous*."

He who had called himself a disciple bowed in token of obedience, helped Morgan to attach his valise to his saddle, and held the horse by the bridle while the other

mounted. Without waiting for his second foot to find the stirrup, Morgan put spurs to his horse, which tore the bridle from the hands of the servant, and set off at a gallop.

On the right hand extended the forest of Seillon, like a sea of shadows, whose gloomy waves undulated and moaned in the night wind.

A quarter of a league beyond Sue, the rider turned his horse across country, and went towards the forest, which, in turn, seemed to advance upon him. The horse, guided by an experienced hand, plunged into it without hesitation. At the end of ten minutes he reappeared upon the other side. A hundred paces from the forest there rose a sombre mass, standing alone in the midst of the plain. It was a building of massive architecture, shadowed by five or six trees of a century's growth.

The horseman stopped before a great door, above which were placed statues of the Virgin Mary, of Christ, and of John the Baptist. That of the Virgin marked the central point of the arch. The mysterious traveller had arrived at the objective point of his journey, — the charter-house of Seillon.

The charter-house of Seillon, the twenty-second of the Order, was founded in 1178. In 1672 a modern building had been substituted for the old monastery, and the ruins of this latter edifice are all that are visible to-day.

These ruins are, on the exterior, the façade, of which we have spoken, which was ornamented with the three statues, and before which the mysterious traveller had stopped; and on the interior, a little chapel, whose entrance was at the right, beneath the great door. A peasant inhabits it now, with his wife and two children, and they have made a farm of the old monastery lands. In 1791 the monks were expelled from their convent; in

1792 the convent itself and its dependencies had been offered for sale as ecclesiastical property. The dependencies were the park adjoining the buildings, and the beautiful forest which bears to this day the name of Seillon.

But at Bourg, a town which was both royalist and religious, no one would risk compromising his soul by buying property which had belonged to the good monks whom every one venerated. The result was, therefore, that the convent, the park, and the forest had become, under the title of Goods of the State, the property of the Republic, or, which amounted to the same thing, the property of no one; for the Republic in the last seven years had had far too much to think of to repair walls, cultivate an orchard, and keep a forest in order.

For the last seven years, then, the monastery had been completely abandoned; and there was grass growing in the court, brambles in the orchard, and underbrush in the forest, which, crossed as it was at that time by only one road and two or three paths, was otherwise, to all appearance at least, impassable. A kind of pavilion, named the Correrie, belonging to the charter-house, about an eighth of a league away from it, was close to the forest, which, profiting by the unrestrained liberty that it enjoyed, had covered it with a luxuriant growth, which had finally hidden it completely from view.

The strangest noises seemed to proceed from these two buildings; they were said to be haunted by hosts which were invisible by day, but terrifying by night. Woodcutters or belated peasants, who sometimes went to enjoy in the Republican forest the same privileges which had been theirs in the time of the monks, reported to have seen, through cracks in the closed shutters, lights which passed along the corridors and staircases, and to have distinctly heard the sound of chains dragging over the

flags of the cloisters and the pavements of the courts The stronger-minded among the people denied these things; but among the credulous ones there were two theories concerning the frightful noises and the nocturnal sights. The patriots affirmed that these were the souls of the poor monks whom the tyranny of the cloisters had buried alive, and who, returning to call down the vengeance of heaven upon their persecutors, dragged about with them after death the chains with which they had been loaded while alive. The royalists said that it was the devil in person, who, finding an empty convent, and having no reason to fear the holy water of the reverend inmates, had quietly come to enjoy himself where formerly he had not dared to put so much as one of his claws.

But there was just one reason why the uncertainty never abated; and that was that neither those who believed nor those who denied, neither those who took the part of the martyrs nor of Beelzebub, had the courage to venture within the shadows, and to come in the solemn hours of the night to assure themselves of the truth, in order to be able to report on the next day whether the charter-house were really haunted, and if so, what kind of ghosts inhabited it.

But doubtless all these reports, whether with or without foundation, had no effect upon the mysterious cavalier; for, as we have said, although the clocks of Bourg had struck nine, and it was therefore fully night, he stopped his horse at the door of the abandoned monastery, and without dismounting, drew a pistol and struck three measured blows upon the door with it, after the manner of free-masons. Then he listened. For a moment he doubted whether there was a meeting at the charter-house; for although he looked and listened attentively, he could neither see nor hear anything. However, he

fancied that a cautious step approached the door. He knocked a second time, in the same manner.

"Who is there?" asked a voice.

"One who comes from Elisha," replied the traveller.

"What king is it whom the sons of Isaac must obey?"

"Jehu."

"What house must they exterminate?"

"That of Ahab."

"Are you a prophet or a disciple?"

"I am a prophet."

"Then you are welcome to the house of the Lord," said the voice.

At once the iron bars which secured the massive monastery door turned, the locks grated harshly, one of the leaves of the double door opened silently, and horse and rider disappeared within the gloomy opening which closed behind them. He who had opened the door so reluctantly, and shut it again so quickly, was dressed in the long white robe of the monks, and the hood, falling over his face, entirely concealed his features.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MONASTERY OF SEILLON.

Doubtless, like that member of the association whom the traveller had met on the road to Sue, the monk who had opened the door only occupied a secondary rank in the brotherhood; for taking the bridle of the horse, he held him while the rider dismounted, thus acting as a groom for the young man.

Morgan dismounted, took his valise, drew the pistols from their places in the saddle and stuck them in his belt beside those which were already there; and then, addressing the monk in a tone of command, he said, —

"I thought to find the brothers assembled in council."

"They are assembled," replied the monk.

"Where are they?"

"In the Correrie. For the last few days suspicious persons have been seen roaming about the monastery, and the greatest precautions have been ordered."

The young man shrugged his shoulders, as though he deemed the precautions useless; and then, still in the same tone of command, he said, "Have the horse taken to the stable, and conduct me to the council."

The monk called another brother, to whom he threw the horse's bridle; and then taking a torch, which he lighted at a lamp which was burning in the little chapel at the right of the great door, he walked before the new arrival. He crossed the cloister, took a few steps in the garden, opened a door leading to a kind of pit, or cistern,

motioned to Morgan to enter, shut the door of the cistern as carefully as he had closed that of the monastery, pushed with his foot a stone which seemed to be lying there by chance, and disclosed a ring, with which he raised a flagstone, thereby revealing the entrance to a subterranean passage, which they traversed for a short distance. They went down some steps, which conducted them to a vaulted passage wide enough for two men to go abreast. They walked thus for five or six minutes, after which they found themselves face to face with an iron gate or grating. The monk drew a key from beneath his robe and opened it. Then, when they had both passed through, and it was locked behind them, the monk asked, —

"By what name shall I announce you?"

"By the name of brother Morgan."

"Wait here. I will return in five minutes."

The young man bowed his head, in token that he was familiar with all these precautions. Then he seated himself upon a tomb, — for they were in the burial place of the convent, — and waited. Scarcely five minutes had slipped away before the monk reappeared.

"Follow me," he said. "The brothers are glad that you are here. They feared that some ill had befallen you."

A few seconds later brother Morgan was introduced into the council chamber. Twelve monks awaited him, with their hoods drawn down over their eyes; but as soon as the door had shut behind him, and the serving brother had disappeared, Morgan took off his mask, and at the same time each monk uncovered his face.

Never had handsomer young men taken part in any gathering. Only two or three among these strange monks had attained the age of forty years. All hands were extended towards Morgan, and he was welcomed on every side.

"Upon my word," said one of those who had welcomed him most effusively, "you have taken a great load off our hearts. We certainly thought you dead, or else a prisoner."

"Dead I might have been, Amiet; but a prisoner, no, — citizen, as they still say sometimes, but as I hope they will soon cease to do. Well, everything went off with the greatest friendliness. As soon as they saw us, the conductor cried to the postilion to stop. I even thought I heard him add, 'I know who it is.' 'Then,' I said to him, 'if you know who it is, my friend, we need enter into no long explanations.' 'The government money?' he asked. 'Exactly,' I replied. Then as he was making a great stir in the carriage, I added, 'See here, my friend! before you do anything else, get down and tell these persons, especially the ladies that we are well-bred men, who will not touch them, and that we will not even look at them unless they put their heads out of the window.' One of them risked it; and upon my word she was charming. I threw a little kiss to her. She gave a little cry, and took refuge inside the carriage, for all the world like Galatea; but, as there were no willow-trees, I did not follow her. During all this time the conductor had been rummaging in his box in such haste, that when he gave me the government money he handed me with it two hundred louis belonging to a poor wine-merchant of Bordeaux."

"Oh, the devil!" exclaimed the one who had been called Amiet, — which name, like Morgan, was probably only a *nom de guerre*, — "what a pity that was! You know that the Directory is always trying to prove that we are nothing but common thieves."

"Now, wait!" said Morgan; "that is just what kept me. I had heard something of the sort at Lyons, and I

was half way on the road to Valence when I discovered the error in etiquette. There was no difficulty in making the discovery; for printed on the sack, as if the good man had had a presentiment of what would happen, were the words, 'Jean Picot, wine-merchant, of Fronsac, near Bordeaux.'"

"And you sent his money back to him?"

"I did better, — I carried it back to him."

"To Fronsac?"

"Oh, no; but to Avignon. I suspected that such a careful man would stop at the first town of any importance, to give information concerning his two hundred louis. I was not mistaken. I asked at the hotel if any one knew citizen Jean Picot. They replied that he was not only known there, but was at that very moment dining at the *table d'hôte*. I went in. You can easily guess that the subject of their conversation was the stopping of the diligence. Imagine the effect of my apparition! The old god descending in his machine would not have been more unexpected. I asked which of the guests was called Jean Picot. The owner of this distinguished and harmonious name was pointed out to me; I placed his two hundred louis before him, and made my excuses, in the name of the Society, for the uneasiness which the companions of Jehu had caused him. I exchanged a sign of friendship with Barjols, and a polite greeting with the Abbé de Rians, who was there. I made my bow to the company, and came away. It was only a trifle, but it took me nearly fifteen hours; but I thought that it was better to be late than to leave any false opinion of us. Have I done well, my masters?"

There was great applause. "Only," said one of the company, "I think you were very imprudent to take the money back yourself."

"My dear colonel," returned the young man, "there is a proverb of Italian origin, which says: 'He who wills, goes; he who wills not, sends.' I wanted to go, and I went."

"And found a fellow who, to thank you, if you ever have the bad luck to fall into the hands of the Directory, will be the first to recognize you, — a recognition which may result in having your throat cut."

"Oh, I will defy him to recognize me."

"What will prevent him?"

"Do you suppose that I go about with my face uncovered? You don't know me, my dear colonel. To put aside my mask is all very well among friends, but with strangers it is another matter. Are we not in the midst of the carnival? Why should I not disguise myself as Abellino or Karl Moor, when Messieurs Gohier, Sieyès, Roger Ducos, Moulin, and Barras are going about disguised as kings of France?"

"Then you entered the city masked?"

"The city, the hotel, and the dining-room. It is true that although my face was covered, my belt was in plain sight, and, as you see, it was well filled."

The young man drew back his cloak, and showed his belt, in which were stuck four pistols, and from which hung a hunting-knife. Then, with the gayety which seemed to be one of the chief characteristics of his organization, he added, —

"I must have looked ferocious, don't you think so? They might have mistaken me for the late Mandrin, coming down from the mountains of Savoy. By the way, here are the sixty thousand francs belonging to his Highness the Directory."

And the young man spurned with his foot the valise which he had put upon the ground, whose bulging sides

gave forth a metallic sound which indicated the presence of gold. Then he mingled with his friends, from whom he had been separated by that distance which naturally arises between a speaker and his audience.

One of the monks stooped and picked up the valise. "Despise the gold if you will, my dear Morgan, since you do not refuse to gather it for us; but I know some fine fellows who are looking with as much impatience and anxiety for the gold that you put under your feet, as ever a caravan in the desert watched for the water which would save it from perishing of thirst."

"I suppose you mean our friends in la Vendée," rejoined Morgan; "much good may it do them! Selfish fellows! they are fighting. They have chosen the roses and given us the thorns. But have they received nothing from England?"

"Yes, indeed," said one of the monks, gayly; "at Quiberon they received both bullets and shells."

"I did not say from the English," returned Morgan; "I said from England."

"Not a sou."

"It seems to me, though," said another, who apparently possessed a cooler head than his companions, "that our princes might send a little money to those who are shedding their blood for the cause of the monarchy. Do they not fear that la Vendée will weary at length, some day or other, of a devotion which has thus far received not even a 'thank you'?"

"La Vendée, my friend," said Morgan, "is a generous land, and you may be sure it will not grow weary; besides, where would be the merit of fidelity if it did not meet with ingratitude? As soon as devotion meets with gratitude, it becomes devotion no longer; it is exchange, since it meets with recompense. Let us always be as

faithful and devoted as possible, gentlemen; and let us pray Heaven to make ingrates of those to whom we devote ourselves; and then, take my word for it, we shall win an enviable name in the history of our civil wars."

Scarcely had Morgan finished formulating this chivalrous maxim, and expressing a wish which had every chance of being fulfilled, when three masonic blows resounded upon the same door at which he had entered.

"Gentlemen," said the monk who seemed to hold the rank of president, "your hoods and masks, quickly! We do not know who is coming."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DIRECTORY'S MONEY.

EACH one hastened to obey, the monks pulling the hoods of their long robes over their faces, and Morgan adjusting his mask.

"Come in!" said the superior.

The door opened, and the serving friar appeared. "A messenger from General Georges Cadoudal demands an audience," he said.

"Has he replied to the three words of the order?"

"Perfectly."

"Let him enter."

The serving friar returned to the subterranean passage, to reappear again almost immediately with a man who, by his costume, was easily recognized as a peasant, and by his square head with its shock of red hair as a Breton. He advanced to the middle of the circle without seeming to be at all disturbed, fixing his eyes in turn upon each of the monks, and waiting until one of the twelve granite statues should break the silence.

The president spoke first. "From whom do you come?" he asked.

"He who sent me," replied the peasant, "bade me, if I was asked, to say that I came from Jehu."

"Are you the bearer of a written or of a verbal message?"

"I am to reply to the questions which you will ask me, and to exchange a slip of paper for the money."

"Very well; we will begin with the questions: What are our brothers doing in la Vendée?"

"They have laid down their arms, and are only waiting a word from you to take them up again."

"And why have they laid down their arms?"

"Because they received an order from his Majesty Louis XVIII. to do so."

"We have heard of a proclamation written by the king's own hand."

"Here is a copy of it."

The peasant handed a paper to his questioner. The latter opened it, and read: —

War only serves to render royalty odious. Monarchs who have gained their thrones by its means are never beloved; such means must therefore be abandoned, to be replaced by the empire of opinions, which will return of themselves to saving principles. "God and the King" will soon be the rallying cry of the French; we must reunite in a formidable sheaf the scattered elements of royalty, abandon la Vendée militant to its unhappy destiny, and walk in a path at once more pacific and less incoherent. The royalists of the West have had their time; now we must rely upon those of Paris, who have everything prepared for a speedy restoration.

The president raised his head, and seeking out Morgan with an eye whose flashing could not be concealed, even by the monk's hood, he said: "Well, brother, here is your wish already accomplished; the royalists of la Vendée and the South will have all the merit of their devotion." Then, looking once more at the proclamation, of which there remained yet a few lines, he continued: —

The Jews crucified their king, and from that time they have been wanderers on the face of the earth; the French guillotined theirs, and they will be dispersed and scattered.

Dated at Blankenbourg, August 25, 1799, the day of our fête, the sixth of our reign.

(Signed) LOUIS.

The young men looked at one another.

"Quos vult perdere Jupiter dementat!" said Morgan.

"Yes," said the president; "but when those whom Jupiter wishes to destroy represent a principle, they must be sustained, — not only against Jupiter, but against themselves. Ajax in the midst of the thunder and lightning clung to a rock, and raising to heaven his clenched fist, said, 'I will escape in spite of the gods.'" Then, turning to Cadoudal's messenger, he asked, "And what answer did he who sent you return to this proclamation?"

"Very nearly what you have just replied yourself. He told me to come and see you, and find out from you whether you were determined to continue in spite of all, in spite of the king himself."

"We are decided," said the president.

"Very well, then," said the peasant. "Here are the real names of the new chiefs and their assumed ones; the general recommends that you use the assumed ones as much as possible in your correspondence, and he will take the same precautions in speaking of you."

"Have you the list?" asked the president.

"No; I might have been captured, and then the list would have been taken. Write, and I will dictate."

The president seated himself at a table, took a pen, and wrote at the dictation of the Vendéean peasant the following names:—

"Georges Cadoudal, Jehu or Round-head; Joseph Cadoudal, Judas Maccabeus; Lahaye Saint-Hilaire, David; Burban-Malabry, Death-defier; Poulpiquez, Royal-carnage; Bonfils, Break-barrier; Dampherné, Piquevers; Duchayla, the Crown; Duparc, the Terrible; La Roche, Mithridates; Puisaye, Jean the Blond."

"Those are the successors of Charette, Stofflet, Cathelineau, D'Elbee, La Rochejaquelein, and Lescure," said a voice.

The Breton turned in the direction of the voice. "If they get themselves killed, like their predecessors," he said, "what more can you ask of them?"

"Well answered," said Morgan; "and so — "

"And so," replied the peasant, "as soon as our general receives your reply, he will take up arms again."

"And if our reply had been in the negative?" asked a voice.

"So much the worse for you," replied the peasant; "in any case, the insurrection was fixed for the 20th of October."

"Well," said the president, "thanks to us, the general will have enough money for the first month. Where is your receipt?"

"Here it is," said the peasant, drawing from his pocket a paper on which were written these words: —

Received from our brothers of the South and East, to be used for the good of the cause, the sum of ————

GEORGES CADOUDAL,
General-in-chief of the Royalist Army of Bretagne.

As will be seen, the sum was omitted.

"Can you write?" asked the president.

"Enough to fill in the three or four words that are required."

"Well, then, write 'One hundred thousand francs.'"

The Breton wrote; then holding out the paper to the president he said, "Here is the receipt; now, where is the money?"

"Stoop down and pick up that bag which is at your feet; it contains sixty thousand francs." Then, addressing one of the monks, he asked, "Montbar, where are the other forty thousand?"

The monk opened a closet, and drew forth a bag a little smaller than the one which Morgan had brought, but

which nevertheless contained the round sum of forty thousand francs. "Here is the whole sum," said the monk.

"And now, my friend," said the president, "eat and rest; to-morrow you shall go."

"They expect me yonder," replied the Vendéean; "I will eat and sleep on my horse. Farewell, gentlemen; may Heaven keep you!" And he moved towards the door by which he had entered.

"Wait!" said Morgan.

The messenger paused.

"News for news," said Morgan. "Tell General Cadoudal that General Bonaparte has left the Egyptian army; that he landed at Fréjus day before yesterday, and that he will be at Paris in three days. My news is worth as much as yours, don't you think so?"

"Impossible!" cried all the monks, as if with one voice.

"Nothing is truer, however, gentlemen. I got the news from our friend the priest, who saw him changing horses an hour before me at Lyons, and recognized him."

"What has he come to France for?" asked two or three voices.

"We shall know soon enough," replied Morgan. "We may be sure that he has not come for the purpose of remaining *incognito*."

"Do not lose an instant in carrying this news to our brothers in the West," said the president to the Vendéean peasant. "Just now I tried to keep you; now I say to you, Go!"

The peasant bowed and went; the president waited until the door had shut.

"Gentlemen," said he, "the news which brother Mor-

gan has just brought is of so grave a nature that I have a special measure to propose."

"What is it?" they all asked, as with one voice.

"It is that one of us, chosen by lot, shall go to Paris, and with the cipher keep us informed of all that passes."

"It is adopted," they rejoined.

"In that case," replied the president, "let each one write his own name upon a piece of paper; we will put them in a hat, and he whose name is drawn will instantly start for Paris."

The young men, as with one movement, approached the table, wrote the thirteen names, each one his own, on the pieces of paper which were tossed to them, and put them in a hat. The youngest was called to draw the chosen name. He drew out one of the rolls of paper and passed it to the president, who unfolded it.

"Morgan!" said the president.

"My instructions?" asked the young man.

"Remember," replied the president, with a solemnity to which the vaulted roof of the cloisters lent a supreme grandeur, "that you are the Baron of Sainte-Hermine that your father was guillotined on the Place de la Révolution; and that your brother was killed in Condé's army. *Noblesse oblige!* Those are your instructions."

"And for the rest?" asked the young man.

"For the rest," said the president, "we trust to your devotion to royalty, and to your loyalty."

"Then, my friends, permit me to take my leave of you at once. I must be on the road to Paris before light, and there is a visit which I must make before I start."

"Go!" said the president, opening his arms. "Let me embrace you in the name of all the brethren. To another

I should say, 'Be brave, persevering, active!' to you I say, 'Be prudent.'"

The young man received the fraternal embrace, saluted his other friends with a smile, exchanged a hand-clasp with two or three of them, wrapped his cloak about him, pulled his hat over his eyes, and departed.

CHAPTER IX.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

In expectation of a speedy departure, Morgan's horse, after having been bathed, rubbed down, and dried, had received a double ration of oats, and had been saddled and bridled anew. The young man had therefore only to ask for him, and leap upon his back. Scarcely was he in the saddle when the gate opened as if by magic; the horse darted out neighing, as if he had forgotten his first run and was ready for a second.

At the door of the charter-house Morgan remained undecided for a moment, as if doubting whether to turn to the right or left; finally he turned to the right, followed for a moment the path which leads from Bourg to Seillon, turned once more to the right, but this time across country, plunged into an angle of forest which he met on his way, reappeared soon on the other side of the wood, gained the high-road from Pont d'Ain, followed it for the space of a half league or more, and did not stop until he reached a group of houses which are called to-day the Maison-des-Gardes. One of these houses bore for a sign a bunch of holly, which indicated one of those places where pedestrians turn aside and rest for a brief space, before continuing the long and fatiguing journey of life.

As he had done at the door of the charter-house, Morgan stopped, drew a pistol from its resting-place, and used

it for a hammer; but as in all probability the worthy people who inhabited the humble inn were not engaged in any conspiracy, the response to the traveller's appeal was longer in coming than at the monastery. At length the step of the stable-boy might be heard, his sabots clicking heavily; the door creaked, and the man who had opened it, seeing a cavalier holding a pistol in his hand, began instinctively to shut it again.

"It is I, Pataut," said the young man; "don't be afraid."

"Ah, that 's a fact," said the peasant; "so it is you, Monsieur Charles? Ah, I am no longer afraid; but you know, as the curé said of the times when the good God was upon earth, 'Precaution is the mother of safety.'"

"Yes, Pataut, yes," said the young man, dismounting, and slipping a piece of silver into the hand of the stable-boy; "but don't worry; the good God will come again, and for that matter so will Monsieur le Curé."

"Oh, as for that," said the man, "it is easy to see that there is no one yonder, according to the way things are going. Will it last long like this, Monsieur Charles?"

"Pataut, I promise you on my word of honor to do my best not to let you get impatient. I am in as much of a hurry as you; and so I beg of you not to go to bed, my good Pataut."

"Ah, you know very well, Monsieur, that when you come I do not go to bed; and as for your horse — do you change your horse every day? Time before last you had a chestnut; last time it was a gray; and now it is a black."

"Yes, I am capricious by nature. As for the horse, he needs nothing except to have his bridle taken off; you may leave the saddle on him. Wait! put this pistol back in its place, and keep these two for me."

"Good!" said the man, laughing. "Plenty of barkers."

"You know, Pataut, they say the roads are not safe."

"Safe! I should think not! Why, Monsieur Charles, they are fairly swarming with brigands. No later than last week they stopped and robbed the diligence from Geneva to Bourg."

"Bah!" said Morgan. "And whom do they accuse of it?"

"Oh, that is nothing but a farce. Just imagine! they say that it was the companions of Jesus! I did not believe a word of it, you may be sure; for who are the companions of Jesus if not the twelve apostles?"

"Who indeed?" rejoined Morgan, with his joyous smile.

"The idea," continued Pataut, "of accusing the twelve apostles of robbing a diligence! That is a little too much! Oh, I tell you, Monsieur Charles, we live in times when nothing is respected." And shaking his head like a man who is disgusted, if not with life, at least with men, Pataut led the horse off to the stable.

As for Morgan, he watched Pataut as he disappeared in the shadows; then turning past the hedge which surrounded the garden, he descended towards a large clump of trees, whose high summits stood out against the night with the majesty of motionless things, shadowing a charming little country-seat, which was called in the neighborhood by the imposing title of the Château of Noires-Fontaines. As Morgan reached the wall of the château, the clock in the village of Montagnac struck the hour. The young man listened to the tones as they vibrated through the calm and silent atmosphere of the autumn night, and counted eleven strokes. As every one knows, much can happen in two hours. Morgan

took a few steps, examined the wall, and seemed to seek for some well-known spot; then, having found it, he put the point of his boot in a crevice between the stones, leaped, like a man who mounts his horse, seized the coping of the wall with his left hand, with a second leap sat astride the wall, and as swift as lightning dropped down upon the other side. All had been done with so much rapidity, skill, and lightness, that if any one had been passing at the moment he would have believed himself to be the sport of imagination.

Morgan paused and listened on this side of the wall, as he had done on the other, at the same time probing with his eyes, as far as the thick shadows cast by the aspens and poplars would permit, the depths of the little wood. All was solitary and silent. Morgan ventured to continue on his way. We say ventured, because ever since he had approached the Château of Noires-Fontaines there had been in every act of the young man a timidity and hesitation so foreign to his character that it was evident that if he felt fear, it was not for himself. He gained the edge of the woods, still taking the same precautions. When he had reached a little lawn, at the farther extremity of which rose the château, he stopped, and attentively examined the façade of the house.

Of the twelve windows which on the three floors pierced this façade, but a single one was lighted. It was on the first floor, at the angle of the house. A little balcony entirely covered with vines, which climbed along the wall, rolled themselves around the iron scroll-work, and fell back again in festoons, projected from this window, and overlooked the garden. At the two sides of the window, placed upon the balcony itself, large-leaved trees grew in boxes, and formed above the cornice a veritable bower of verdure. A blind, which could be

drawn up and down with cords, separated the balcony from the window, forming a screen which could be removed at will. It was through the chinks in the blind that Morgan had seen the light.

The first impulse of the young man was to go straight across the lawn; but here again the fears of which we have spoken seemed to restrain him. A linden walk skirted the wall, and led to the house. He made a *détour*, and disappeared within the leafy shadow. Then, when he had reached the end of the walk, he crossed the open space as swiftly as a frightened doe, and found himself at the foot of the wall, in the thick shadow made by the house. He drew back several steps, with his eyes fixed upon the window, being careful to keep within the shadow. Then, when he had reached the required spot, he clapped his hands three times.

At this, a shadow appeared from the depths of the apartment, and came, graceful, flexible, almost transparent, to outline itself against the window. Morgan repeated the signal. Instantly the window opened, the blind was pulled up, and a beautiful young girl in a dressing-gown, with her blond hair flowing over her shoulders, appeared in the midst of the verdure.

The young man extended his arms to the arms that were held out to him, and two names, or rather two exclamations leaping from the heart, crossed each other, both sounding at the same time.

"Charles!"

"Amélie!"

Then the young man leaped upon the wall, clinging to the stems of the vines, to the rough places in the stones, and to the projections in the carvings, and in a second was upon the balcony. What they said to each other then was only a murmur of love, lost in an interminable kiss.

But with gentle force the young man drew his companion within the room, while with his other arm he loosened the cords of the blind, which fell noisily behind them. Behind the blind the window closed. Then the light was extinguished, and the façade of the Château of Noires-Fontaines was in obscurity.

This obscurity had lasted for perhaps a quarter of an hour, when there came the rolling of a carriage over the road leading from the highway from Pont d'Ain to the entrance of the château. Then the noise ceased. The carriage had stopped before the gate.

CHAPTER X.

ROLAND'S FAMILY.

The carriage which had stopped at the château contained Roland and his friend Sir John. So little were they expected, that, as we have said, all the lights were out, even that of Amélie's room. The postilion for the last five hundred steps had cracked his whip with all his might, but even that had failed to arouse the country people from their first slumber.

When the carriage stopped, Roland sprang from it, without touching the step, and rang the bell. This lasted for five minutes, during which, after each pull at the bell, Roland went back to the carriage to say, "Do not get impatient, Sir John."

Finally a window was opened, and a childish but determined voice cried out, "Who is ringing like that?"

"Ah, is it you, Edward?" said Roland. "Open the door quickly."

The boy drew back with a joyous cry and disappeared; but his voice could be heard calling through the corridors, —

"Mother! awake! it is Roland! Sister! wake up! it is our big brother!" Then, only partly dressed, he rushed down the stairs, crying, "Don't be impatient, Roland! Here I am! here I am!"

An instant later the key turned in the lock, and the bolts slipped back; then a little form appeared upon the

step, and flew rather than ran towards the gate, which a moment after turned upon its hinges and opened. The child leaped upon Roland's neck and hung there.

"Oh, brother! brother!" he exclaimed, embracing the young man, and laughing and crying at the same time; "oh, brother Roland, how happy Mamma will be! and Amélie too! Everybody is well. I am the sickest of the lot — oh, except Michel, you know, the gardener, who has sprained himself. Why are you not in soldier's clothes? You look so ugly when you are dressed like a citizen. You have just come from Egypt; have you brought me some pistols mounted in silver, and a beautiful curved sabre? No? Oh, then you are naughty, and I will not kiss you any more. But no, no, don't be afraid; I love you just the same!"

And the boy covered his brother with kisses, while he overwhelmed him with questions. The Englishman, who had not left the carriage, watched it all through the door, and smiled.

In the midst of these fraternal embraces a woman's voice was heard, — the mother's voice!

"Oh, is it my Roland, my beloved son?" exclaimed Mme. de Montrevel, in accents so full of joy that they were almost painful. "Where is he? Is it true that he has come? Is it true that he is not a prisoner, not dead? Is it true that he is alive?"

The child at the sound of this voice slipped from Roland's arms, alighted on his feet upon the grass, and sprang towards his mother. "This way, Mother! this way!" he called, dragging his mother towards Roland.

At the sight of his mother, Roland could contain himself no longer. The ice which had frozen in his breast seemed to melt; his heart beat like that of any one else. "Ah," he cried, "I was certainly ungrateful to God,

when life can give me such joys!" And he threw himself sobbing upon Mme. de Montrevel's neck, entirely forgetting Sir John, who on his own part, felt his Anglican phlegm disappearing, as he silently wiped away the tears which ran down over his cheeks and mingled with his smile. The child, the mother, and Roland formed an adorable group of tenderness and emotion.

Suddenly Edward, like a leaf blown by the wind, detached himself from the group, crying, "Where can Amélie be?" Then he ran towards the house, calling, "Sister Amélie! awake! get up! hurry!"

Then they could hear him kicking and striking against a door. There was silence for a moment. Presently they heard Edward exclaim, —

"Help, Mamma! help, brother Roland! Amélie is ill!"

Mme. de Montrevel and her son hastened into the house. Sir John, who, like the finished tourist that he was, always carried a case of surgical instruments and a flask of salts, got out of the carriage, and obeying his first impulse, advanced as far as the doorstep. There he paused, remembering that he had not received an introduction, — that all-powerful formality with an Englishman.

But just at that moment that which he was seeking came to him. The noise which her brother had made at her door had finally brought Amélie to the landing; but doubtless her agitation at Roland's return had been too great, for after having descended a few steps almost mechanically, and as if making a violent effort to command herself, she had uttered a sigh, and like a drooping flower, an overweighted branch, or a floating scarf, she fell, or rather drifted down, upon the staircase.

It was then that the child cried out. But at the boy's

cry Amélie recovered, if not her strength, at least her will-power. She stood erect, and stammering, "Be still, Edward! be still, in the name of Heaven! I am all right!" she caught hold of the banister with one hand, and leaning upon the child with the other, she continued to descend the stairs. On the last step she met her mother and brother; with a violent, almost despairing movement, she threw her arms around Roland's neck, crying, "Brother! brother!"

Then Roland felt that she leaned more heavily upon his shoulder, and saying, "She is ill; let her have more air!" he drew her towards the door.

The group that was now before Sir John's eyes was very different from the other. As she breathed the fresh air, Amélie sighed and lifted up her head. Just then the moon appeared in all its splendor from behind a cloud which had veiled it, and lighted Amélie's face, which was as pale as its own.

Sir John uttered a cry of admiration. Never had he seen marble statue so perfect as the living marble beneath his eyes. Amélie was indeed marvellously beautiful. Dressed in a long cambric wrapper, which outlined a form moulded after that of a goddess; her face pale, and slightly drooping over her brother's shoulder; her long golden hair falling over snowy shoulders; her arm thrown around her mother's neck, and her hand, like tinted alabaster, hanging over the red shawl in which Mme. de Montrevel was wrapped, — it was thus that Roland's sister appeared to Sir John.

At the cry of admiration which escaped the Englishman's lips, Roland remembered that he was there, and Mme. de Montrevel also perceived his presence. As for the child, astonished at seeing a stranger in his mother's house, he rapidly descended the steps, and pausing upon

the third from the bottom, not because he feared to go farther, but because he was thus upon a level with the other, he said, —

"Who are you, sir, and what are you doing here?"

"My dear Edward," replied Sir John, "I am your brother's friend; and I have brought you the silver-mounted pistols and the Damascus sword for which you asked just now."

"Where are they?" asked the boy.

"Ah," said Sir John, "they are in England, and it will take some time to get them here; but your big brother there will answer for me, and tell you that I am a man of my word."

"Yes, Edward, yes," said Roland; "if my lord has promised them to you they are as good as yours." Then addressing Mme. de Montrevel and his sister, he added, —

"Excuse me, mother; I beg your pardon, Amélie, — or rather you must both make your excuses to my lord as best you can, for having made me abominably ungrateful." Then going to Sir John, and taking him by the hand, he continued: "Mother, my lord found opportunity, the first time he ever saw me, to do me a great service; I know you never forget such things, and I hope therefore that you will always remember that Sir John is one of your best friends. He will give you a proof of it when he confirms my statement that he has consented to bore himself for two or three weeks with us here."

"Madame," said Sir John, "permit me, instead of repeating my friend Roland's statement, to say that I should like to spend, not two or three weeks, but rather my entire life, with you here."

Mme. de Montrevel descended the steps, and held out to Sir John a hand, which he kissed with true French gallantry. "My lord," she said, "the house is yours;

the day of your arrival is a day of rejoicing, and the day when you take your departure will be a day of mourning."

Sir John turned to Amélie, who, confused at having appeared in *négligé* before a stranger, was drawing the folds of her wrapper about her neck.

"I speak to you in my daughter's name as well as my own," added Mme. de Montrevel, coming to Amélie's aid. "She is too much overcome just now by her brother's unexpected return to welcome you as she will do later."

"Sister," said Roland, "if you will permit Sir John to kiss your hand, he will, I am sure, accept that as a welcome from you."

Amélie stammered a few words, and slowly raising her arm, gave her hand to Sir John with a smile that was almost mournful.

The Englishman took her hand, but finding it as cold as ice, instead of kissing it, said: "Roland, your sister is really ill; we must think only of her health. I am something of a physician, and if, instead of the favor which she was about to grant me, she will allow me to feel her pulse, I will be equally grateful."

But as if she feared lest they should discover the cause of her illness, Amélie hastily drew her hand away, saying: "No, my lord is mistaken. Joy never makes any one ill; and it is simply joy at my brother's unexpected return which caused the momentary indisposition that has already disappeared." Then turning towards Mme. de Montrevel, she added rapidly, almost feverishly: "Mamma, we forget that these gentlemen have just finished a long journey; that they have probably had nothing to eat since they left Lyons; and that if Roland still has the good appetite that we remember so well, he will not refuse to allow you to do the honors of the house for him and my lord, while

I occupy myself with more prosaic but equally necessary household duties."

And leaving her mother, as she had said, to do the honors of the house, Amélie went to waken the servants, leaving upon Sir John's mind that sort of weird remembrance which a tourist on the Rhine would feel if he should see an apparition of the Lorelei standing upon her rock, harp in hand, with the fluid gold of her hair floating upon the breezes of the night.

While all this was passing, Morgan remounted his horse, galloped swiftly to the charter-house, stopped before the door, drew a note-book from his pocket, and writing upon one of the leaves a few lines with his pencil, tore out the leaf, rolled it up, and pushed it through the key-hole, without taking time to dismount. Then putting spurs to his horse he disappeared in the forest.

This was what he had written :—

"Louis de Montrevel, *aide-de-camp* to General Bonaparte, arrived to-night at the Château of Noires-Fontaines. Take care of yourselves, Companions of Jehu!"

But while he warned his friends to beware of Louis de Montrevel, Morgan had put a cross above his name, signifying that, whatever happened, they were not to harm the young officer. Each companion of Jehu was at liberty to protect a friend, without giving his reasons for so doing. Morgan took advantage of this privilege to protect the brother of his love.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHÂTEAU OF NOIRES-FONTAINES.

The château of Noires-Fontaines was situated in one of the most charming spots in the valley which contained the town of Bourg. Its grounds, five or six acres in extent, planted with trees of a century's growth, were enclosed on three sides by walls of brown sandstone, opened on the front by a gate of wrought iron, fashioned after the time and style of Louis XV.; on the fourth side ran the little river Reyssouse, a charming stream which has its source at Journaud, at the foot of the first steeps of the Juras, and which, flowing almost imperceptibly from south to north, empties into the Saône at the bridge of Fleurville, opposite Pont-de-Vaux, the country of Joubert, who, one month before the time of which we are writing, had been killed at the fatal battle of Novi. Beyond the Reyssouse, and extending along its banks to the right and left of the Château of Noires-Fontaines, were the villages of Montagnat and Saint-Just, and the larger one of Ceyzeriat. Behind the latter town were outlined the graceful silhouettes of the hills of the Juras, above whose crests could be distinguished the cloud-like summits of the mountains of Bugey, which seemed to be peering curiously over the shoulders of their younger sisters at what went on in the valley of the Ain.

It was in this delightful spot that Sir John awoke. For perhaps the first time in his life, the taciturn Englishman

smiled at the face of Nature; he could imagine himself in one of those beautiful valleys of Thessaly, celebrated by Virgil, or near one of the gentle rivers of Lignon, of which D'Urfe sang. He was roused from his revery by three light taps upon his door; his host, Roland, had come to see how he had passed the night. He found him as radiant as the sun, which was playing among the yellowing leaves of the chestnuts and lindens.

"Ah, Sir John," he said, "permit me to congratulate you. I expected to see a man as sad as those poor monks in the long white robes who used to be the terror of my youth, although, to tell the truth, I was never very much given to fear; but on the contrary, although we are in the midst of the melancholy month of October, I find you as smiling as a May morning."

"My dear Roland," replied Sir John, "my mother died on the day of my birth; my father when I was twelve years old. At an age when boys usually go to college, I was the master of a fortune, the income from which amounted to more than a million francs; but I was alone in the world, without any one whom I could love, or who would love me. The sweet joys of family life are entirely unknown to me. From the time I was twelve until I was eighteen, I studied at the University of Cambridge; my taciturn and perhaps haughty nature isolated me from my young companions. At the age of eighteen I travelled. You, who travel through the world under the shadow of your flag, and protected by your country; who feel every day the desire for glory and the emotions of war, — you can have no idea what a melancholy thing it is to travel through towns, provinces, States, kingdoms, only to visit a church here, a château there; to turn out of bed at four o'clock in the morning at the pitiless command of a guide in order to see the sun rise from Rhigi

or Etna; to pass like a ghost among the living shadows that we call men; not to know where to stop; to have no place in which to take root, no arm upon which to lean, no heart to receive the outpourings of one's own. Well, last night, my dear Roland, in a moment, a second, this void in my life appeared to be filled. I lived your life; I saw you enjoy the things for which I have longed; I saw the family life of which I am ignorant, as it gathered about you. When I looked at your mother, I said to myself, 'My mother would have been like that, I am sure.' When I saw your sister, I thought, 'If I had had a sister, I should have liked to have her like that.' When I embraced your little brother, it was with the thought that I might possibly have had a child of that age, who could have come after me in the world; although I know that I shall die as I have lived, sad and lonely. Ah, you are happy, Roland; you have a family, you have glory, you have youth, you have even beauty, — and that is not such a bad thing for a man after all. You have every joy, every happiness; you are a fortunate, a very fortunate man, Roland."

"Very well, my lord," said Roland, "but you forget my aneurism."

Sir John looked incredulously at the young man, who was certainly the picture of health. "Give me your aneurism in exchange for my income of a million," said Lord Tanlay, sadly, "provided that with your aneurism you gave me the mother who wept with joy at seeing you again, the sister whose joy at your arrival fairly made her ill, the child who hung upon your neck like fresh and beautiful fruit upon a young and thrifty tree; provided that with all this you gave me this château with its delightful shade, this river with its flowery banks, these far-off mountains upon whose sides white villages nestle like

snowy swans. Give me your aneurism, Roland, with death in three years, two years, one year, six months even; but with it give me six months of your life, so full, so varied, so sweet, so glorious, and I would think myself a happy man."

Roland burst out laughing, with the nervous laugh which was peculiar to him. "Ah," he said, "there spoke the tourist, the superficial traveller, the wandering Jew of civilization, who, stopping nowhere, can appreciate nothing; who judges everything by the sensation which it brings to himself, and says without opening the doors that enclose the habitations of those fools whom we call men, 'Behind those walls they are happy!' Well, my friend, you see that charming river, do you not; those pretty flowery banks, those beautiful villages? It is the image of peace, of innocence, of brotherly love; it is the century of Saturn, the golden age; it is Eden; it is paradise. Well, now, all this is filled with people who cut one another's throats; the jungles of Calcutta, the reeds of Bengal, are not peopled with more ferocious tigers or more cruel panthers than these pretty villages on the borders of this charming river. After having funeral festivities for the good, the great, the immortal Marat, whom they finally — God be praised! — threw into the sewer, like the carrion that he was; after having funeral fêtes, I say, in which each one carried an urn to hold all the tears he could shed, our good Bressans, our dear Bressans, our chicken-fatteners took it into their heads that all republicans were assassins; and so they killed them by the cart-load, to correct this unfortunate habit which men have of assassinating one another. Do you doubt it? On the Lons-le-Saulnier road, if you are curious, they will show you the place where, barely six months ago, they set up a slaughter-house, which would have sickened the stoutest

sabreur of our battle-fields. Imagine a wagonload of prisoners on the road to Lons-le-Saulnier; a wagon with a rack, — one of those immense carts on which they take calves to the slaughter-house; in this cart thirty or more men, whose sole crime was a foolish exultation of thoughts and menacing words; all of them bound and gagged, with heads hanging down and shaken by the jolts, and with bosoms panting with thirst, despair, and terror, — wretches who had not even, as in the time of Nero or Commodus, the privilege of fighting for their lives in the arena; who were powerless and motionless before their own massacre; who were murdered while they were bound; and who were struck not only while they were alive, but even after life had departed from them; whose bodies, after life had fled, were given up to dull, heavy strokes of the club, which broke the flesh and ground the bones, while women looked peacefully on, and held their children above their heads as the little things applauded! Imagine old men, who ought only to have been thinking of dying like Christians, but who helped by their cries and excitement to bring these wretches to despair; and in the midst of these old men a little septuagenarian, coquettish, well-powdered, flicking away from his lace shirt-front the least speck of dirt, taking his Spanish tobacco out of a golden snuff-box with a diamond monogram, eating his amber lozenges out of a Sevres *bonbonnière* which Mme. de Barry gave him, and which was ornamented with the portrait of the donor, — imagine this septuagenarian kicking with his thin shoes those bodies which were nothing more than a mass of human flesh, and fatiguing his withered old arms by striking with his slender cane those corpses which did not seem to him to be sufficiently dead! My friend, I have seen Montebello, Arcole, Rivoli, and the Pyramids, — I thought there could never be anything more terrible;

but the mere story of these things, which my mother related to me last night, after you had gone to your room, fairly made my hair stand on end. This is enough of itself to explain my poor sister's attack, as my aneurism explains my own."

Sir John looked and listened with the curious astonishment which the misanthropical moods of his friend always caused him. Roland always seemed to be lying in ambush in some corner of the conversation, ready to spring upon the human race at the least occasion which should manifest itself.

Roland perceived now the effect which his words had had upon Sir John, and completely changed his tone, substituting bitter raillery for misanthropical earnestness. "It is true," he said, "that aside from the excellent aristocrat who finished what the murderers had begun, and who dipped his colorless old talons in blood, the people who do this sort of thing are people of the lower class, — townsfolk and rustics, as our ancestors called those who nourished them; the nobles do the business more elegantly. You saw what passed at Avignon, did you not? If any one had told you of it, would you have believed it? These men who rob the diligences now, pride themselves upon their delicacy; they have two faces, not counting their masks, — they are now Cartouches and Mandrins, now Amadis and Galaors. They tell fabulous stories of these heroes of the high-road. My mother told me last night that there was one named Laurent, — this being, you understand, only a name given to conceal some other, as the mask conceals the face, — there was one named Laurent, then, who united in himself all the qualities of a hero of romance and all accomplishments. He was beautiful as an ideal; he was one of a band of seventy-two companions of Jehu, who had just been tried at

Yssengeaux. Seventy of them were acquitted; he and one other were condemned to death. They sent the innocent ones to their homes, and they kept Laurent and his companion for the guillotine. But M. Laurent's head was too pretty to fall beneath the executioner's knife; the judges who had judged him, and the curious ones who came to see him executed, had forgotten this corporeal recommendation of beauty, as Montaigne has it. There was a woman at the jailer's house at Yssengeaux, — his daughter, his sister, or his niece, history — for it is history and not romance that I am telling you — history does not state which; enough that the woman, whoever she was, fell in love with the beautiful condemned man, so much so that two hours before the execution, when Master Laurent was expecting to see the executioner appear, he saw his saving angel enter instead. I cannot tell you how it was done, for I know nothing about it, — the lovers had good reason for not entering into details; but the truth is (and I beg you always to bear in mind, Sir John, that it is the truth that I am telling), Laurent found himself at liberty, only regretting that he could not save his companion, who was in another cell. Gensonné under similar circumstances refused to escape, and preferred to die with his companions the Girondins; but, then, Gensonné had not the head of Antinous upon the body of Apollo: the more beautiful the head is, you know, the more one thinks of it. Laurent, therefore, accepted the offer which was made to him, and escaped; a horse was waiting for him at the next village; the young girl, who might have retarded or embarrassed his flight, was to join him there at daybreak. Day came, but did not bring the saving angel. Our hero seems to have thought more of his mistress than of his companion, for he would not go without her. It was six o'clock in the morning, the very hour fixed for the execu-

tion; his impatience increased. Three times since four o'clock, had he turned his horse's head in the direction of the town, and each time he had approached a little nearer to it. At the third time a horrible idea came into his head; it was that his mistress had been taken, and was to pay for his life with her own. He had come to the first houses; and now he spurred on his horse, re-entered the city, and crossed it with uncovered face, before the eyes of men who knew him, and who were astonished to see him at liberty and on horseback when they were expecting to see him bound and gagged and in a cart; crossed the place of execution, where the executioner had just learned that one of his victims had disappeared, and perceived his deliverer, who was forcing her way through the crowd, not to see the execution, but to go to him. At sight of her he spurred his horse, and leaped towards her, overturning two or three loungers as he did so; he reached her, threw her upon his saddle-bow, uttered a joyful cry, and disappeared, waving his hat like Condé at the battle of Lens; and the people applauded, and the women thought the action heroic, and fell in love with the hero."

Roland paused, and as Sir John was still silent, he looked at him inquiringly.

"Go on," replied the Englishman, "I am listening to you; and as I am sure you are telling me all this only to lead up to something which you have not yet mentioned, I am waiting."

"Well," said Roland, laughing, "you are right; and upon my word you know me as well as if we had been college chums. Well, do you know the idea which came into my head last night? It was to find out what these companions of Jehu are like, near at hand."

"Oh, I understand. Having failed to get yourself

killed by M. de Barjols, you are going to try M. Morgan instead."

"Or some one else," replied the young officer, quietly; "for I have nothing against M. Morgan, — quite the contrary; although my first thought, when he came into the dining-room and made his little speech, was to throw myself upon his neck and strangle him with one hand, while with the other I tore away his mask."

"Now that I know you, my dear Roland, I have no hesitation in asking why you did not carry out that beautiful project?"

"I declare to you that it was not my fault. I started to do it, but my companion held me back."

"Then there are persons who can hold you back?"

"Not many; but this one can."

"Do you regret it?"

"To tell the truth, no. This robber of diligences went about his business with a boldness which pleased me. I like brave people, instinctively; if I had not killed M. de Barjols, I should have been his friend. It is true that I could not find out how brave he was without killing him. But let us speak of something else, — that duel is one of my unhappy memories. Why did I come up here? It certainly was not for the purpose of speaking to you of the exploits of the companions of Jehu, nor of M. Laurent. Ah, it was to try and find out what you would like to do while you are here. I would willingly do anything in the world, my dear guest, for the sake of amusing you; but I have two things against me, — my country, which is not very amusing; and your nation, which is not very easily amused."

"I have already told you, Roland," said Sir John, holding out his hand, "that I think the Château of Noires Fontaines is paradise itself."

"Granted; but nevertheless, in the fear lest you find your paradise monotonous, I will do my best to amuse you. Have you a taste for archeology? We have the church of Brou, — a wonder, with the lacework sculptured by Master Colomban; there is a legend about it, which I will tell you some night when you cannot sleep. You will see there the tombs of Marguerite de Bourbon, Philippe le Beau, and Marguerite of Austria; we will let you guess the grand problem of the motto, — 'Fortune, infortune, fortune,' — which I have had the presumption to solve by this Latinized version, 'Fortuna, infortuna, forti una.' Do you like fishing? You have the Reyssouse at your very feet; at your fingers' ends there is a collection of hooks and lines belonging to Edward, and some nets of Michel. As for the fishes, they are the last things to be considered. Do you like hunting? We have the forest of Seillon almost at our doors; there is no hunting with horses and dogs, you understand, but plenty of shooting. The woods of my ancient bugbears the monks abound in wild boars, deer, rabbits, and foxes. No one hunts there, because it belongs to the government, and just now the government is no one. As *aide-de-camp* to General Bonaparte, I will fill the void, and we will see whether any one objects to my killing boars, deer, foxes, and hares on the Reyssouse, after having hunted the Austrians on the Adige and the Mamelukes on the Nile. One day of archeology, one of fishing, and one of hunting, — there are three days; you see, my dear friend, that that leaves us only fifteen or sixteen to be anxious about."

"My dear Roland," replied Sir John, sadly, without paying any attention to this voluble speech, "will you not tell me what fever it is that is devouring you, — what grief it is that preys upon you?"

"There, now!" said Roland, with a burst of harsh

laughter, "I never was gayer than I am this morning; it is you who have the blues this time, my lord."

"Some day I shall be really your friend," replied Sir John, quietly. "When that day comes, you will give me your confidence; when that day comes, I will share your troubles."

"And my aneurism? Are you hungry, my lord?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because I hear Edward coming upstairs to tell us that breakfast is ready."

In fact, Roland had scarcely pronounced the last word when the door opened, and the child said: "Brother Roland, Mamma and Sister Amélie are waiting breakfast for you."

Then taking the Englishman's right hand, Edward looked attentively at the first joint of the thumb, and the first and second fingers.

"What are you looking at, my young friend?" asked Sir John.

"I am looking to see if you have any ink on your fingers."

"And suppose I had, what would it mean?"

"That you had been writing to England, to send for my pistols and sword."

"No, I have not written," said Sir John; "but I will write to-day."

"Do you hear that, brother Roland? In a fortnight I shall have my pistols and sword!"

And the happy child held up his firm, rosy cheek to Sir John, who kissed him as tenderly as if he had been his father. Then all three went down to the dining-room, where they found Amélie and Mme. de Montrevel awaiting them.

CHAPTER XII.

PROVINCIAL PLEASURES.

THE same day Roland put into execution a part of his programme. He took Sir John to visit the church at Brou. Those who have seen the charming little chapel of Brou know that it is one of the hundred wonders of the Renaissance; and those who have not seen it have heard of it.

Roland, who had looked forward with pleasure to doing the honors of this historical *bijou* for Sir John, and who had not seen it himself for seven or eight years, was much disappointed to find the niches of the saints empty, and the small figures on the doorway decapitated. He asked for the sacristan, but they laughed in his face. There was no longer any sacristan. He asked to whom he should apply for the keys; he was told to go to the captain of police. The captain of police was not far away, the cloister belonging to the church having been converted into barracks.

Roland went up to the captain's room, and introduced himself as one of Napoleon's *aides-de-camp*. The captain, with the passive obedience of an inferior to his superior, gave him the keys, and followed him. Sir John was waiting at the door, admiring, in spite of the mutilations which they had endured, the admirable details of the façade. Roland opened the door, and drew back in astonishment; the church was literally stuffed with hay, like a cannon loaded to the mouth.

"What is this?" he demanded.

"It is a precaution adopted by the municipality," replied the captain.

"A precaution?"

"Yes."

"To what end?"

"That of preserving the church. They were going to destroy it, but the mayor ordered that in expiation of the mistaken creed which it had served it should be used as a storehouse for fodder."

Roland burst out laughing, and turning to Sir John, he exclaimed: "My lord, the church was a curious sight, but I think that what we have just heard is not less remarkable. You can find almost everywhere — at Strasbourg, Cologne, or Milan, for example — a church or a dome which is as good as the chapel of Brou; but I think you will hardly find administrators elsewhere who are stupid enough to destroy a *chef-d'œuvre*, or a mayor intelligent enough to turn it into a storehouse for hay. A thousand thanks, Captain; here are your keys."

"As I remarked at Avignon the first time I ever saw you," said Sir John, "the French are a very amusing people."

"In this case, my lord, you are too polite," replied Roland. "You should have said idiotic. I can understand the political convulsions which have overturned our society for the last thousand years; I can understand the communes, the Jacquerie, the St.-Bartholomew, the Ligue, the Fronde, the Revolution; I can understand the 14th of July, the 5th and 6th of October, the 20th of June, the 10th of August, the 2d and 3d of September, the 21st of January, the 31st of May, the 30th of October, and the 9th Thermidor; I can understand the torch of civil war, with its wildfire which is kindled with blood instead of

extinguished by it; I can understand the ocean of revolutions, whose rising tide is irresistible, and whose ebb carries with it the ruins of the institutions which its flood has overturned, — I can understand all this, for it is lance against lance, sword against sword, men against men, people against people! I can understand the mortal frenzy of the conquerors, the bloody reactions of the conquered; I can understand the political volcanoes which groan in the entrails of the globe, which shake the earth, which overturn thrones, and destroy monarchies, rolling heads and crowns upon a scaffold. But what I cannot understand is the mutilation of granite, the outlawry of monuments; the destruction of inanimate things, which belong neither to those who destroy nor to the epoch which they seek to annihilate; the destruction of that gigantic library wherein the antiquary can read the archeological history of a country. Oh, the vandals! the barbarians! better still, the idiots! who avenge themselves upon the stones for the crimes of a Borgia or the debauches of a Louis XV.! How well they understood perverse, destructive man, these Pharaohs, Menes, Cheops, and Osymandias, who caused their pyramids to be built, not with interlaced foliage and lofty lace-work, but with blocks of granite fifty feet long! How they must have chuckled in their sepulchres as they watched the effects of the scythe of Time and the finger-nails of the pachas upon that granite! Let us build pyramids, my lord. It is not as difficult as architecture nor as beautiful as art; but it is solid; it enables a general, after four thousand years, to say: 'Soldiers, from the top of these monuments forty centuries are watching you!' Upon my honor, my lord, I should like to meet a windmill and pick a quarrel with it."

And Roland, bursting into his habitual laugh, drew Sir John in the direction of the château.

Sir John stopped him. "Is there nothing in the whole place to see," he asked, "except the church?"

"Before it was converted into a storehouse," replied Roland, "I would have proposed to you to go down into the burial vaults of the dukes of Savoy with me; we would have sought together for a subterranean passage which is said to exist, which is almost a league in length, and which communicates, so they say, with the grotto of Ceyzeriat. Please take notice that I should not propose such an entertainment to any one but an Englishman; it would have been a second edition of the 'Mysteries of Udolpho,' by the celebrated Anne Radcliffe; but you see that it is now impossible. Well, come on."

"And where shall we go?"

"Upon my word, I don't know. Ten years ago I would have taken you to the establishments where they fattened poultry. The pullets of Bresse, you must know, had a European reputation. Bourg was the place from which Strasbourg was supplied. But during the terror, all the people who were engaged in this business shut up shop; it was called aristocratic to eat pullets, and aristocrats were doomed. After the fall of Robespierre they opened again; but since the 18th Fructidor everything has grown thin in France, even the poultry. Never mind, I will show you something else, — the place where those who ate the chickens were executed, for example. Besides, since I have been in the city they have changed the very names of the streets; I don't know why."

"Ah," said Sir John, "then you are not a republican?"

"Yes, I am! I call myself an excellent republican, and feel that I am even capable of burning myself like Mucius Scævola, or of throwing myself into a gulf like Curtius, to save the republic; but unhappily my sense of the ludicrous is very keen, and anything ridiculous makes

me laugh in spite of myself. I willingly accepted the constitution of 1791; but when poor Hérault de Séchelles wrote to the director of the national library to send him the laws of Minos, so that he could make a constitution upon the model of that of the Isle of Crete, I thought they were going a good way for a model, and that we might content ourselves with that of Lycurgus. In my opinion, January, February, and March, mythological as they are, are just as good as Nivose, Pluviose, and Ventose. I cannot understand why, when people are called Antoine or Chrysostome in 1789, they must be called Brutus or Cassius in 1793. Now, here, my lord, here is an honest street, which was once called the Rue des Halles; there was nothing indecent or aristocratic about that, was there? Well, it is called now — wait!" Roland looked at the name. "It is called now the Rue de la Révolution. There is another which was called the Rue Notre-Dame, and which is named now the Rue du Temple. Why temple? Now, look at this third one; it was called the Rue Crevecœur, an illustrious name in Bresse, Burgundy, and Flanders; it is now called the Rue de la Fédération. Federation is a beautiful thing, but Crevecœur was a fine name. And then, you see, it leads straight down to the Place de la Guillotine, which in my opinion is a mistake; if I had my way, there should be no streets at all leading to that article. This one has one advantage; it is only a hundred steps from the prison, — which saved, and still saves, the cost of a horse and cart to the city. And then the place is admirably arranged for spectators; and my ancestor Montrevel, whose name it bears, has worked out the great problem, yet to be solved in the theatres, of being able to see from every place. If ever any one cuts off my head, which would not be at all extraordinary as times go, I should have only one re-

gret, — that of not being in a position to see the show as well as others.

"There, now," continued Roland, "come up this little hill with me; here we are on the Place des Lices. Our Revolutionists have left that name, probably because they did not know what it meant; I don't know much better than they, but I believe a lord of Estavayer defied some Flemish count or other, and that the fight took place here. And now, my lord, this prison will give you some idea of human vicissitudes. Gil Blas did not change his condition any oftener than has this monument of destiny. Before the time of Cæsar it was a temple of the Gauls; Cæsar made a Roman fortress of it; an unknown architect transformed it into a military citadel in the Middle Ages; the lords of Baye, following the example of Cæsar, made a fortress of it again; the princes of Savoy used it for a residence; it was there that the aunt of Charles V. stayed when she came to look at her church of Brou, which she was destined never to see finished. Finally, after the treaty of Lyons, they made of it both a prison and a palace of Justice. Wait for me here, my lord, if you object to locks and bolts. I have a visit to pay to a certain cell."

"Locks and bolts are certainly not very cheerful," said Sir John, "but no matter. Since you have undertaken my education, lead the way to your cell."

"Well, then, come in quickly. I think I see a lot of persons who look as if they wanted to speak with me."

And in fact, little by little, a kind of rumor had seemed to get whispered about the town; persons came out of the houses and stood in groups on the street, and looked curiously at Roland. He rang the bell at the gate, which was situated as it is to-day, except that it opened upon the prison yard. A turnkey came to open it.

"Ah, are you here still, Father Courtois?" said the young man.

The jailer looked at him in astonishment. "How does it happen," he asked through the grating, "that you know my name when I don't know yours?"

"I know not only your name, but your principles; you are an old royalist, Father Courtois."

"Sir," said the terrified turnkey, "no jokes, if you please; tell me what you want."

"Well, Father Courtois, I should like to visit the cell where my mother and sister, Mme. and Mdlle. de Montrevel, were confined."

"What!" cried the *concierge*, "is it you, Monsieur Louis? Well, you were right in saying that I did not recognize you. Do you know that you have grown to be a fine-looking fellow?"

"Do you think so, Father Courtois? Well, I can return the compliment, — your daughter Charlotte is a beautiful girl. Charlotte is my sister's maid, my lord."

"And she thinks herself very lucky; she likes it better than being here, Monsieur Roland. Is it true that you are *aide-de-camp* to General Bonaparte?"

"Alas! Courtois, I have that honor. You would like me better if I were *aide-de-camp* to the Count d'Artois or the Duke d'Angoulême, would you not?"

"Hush, Monsieur Louis!" Then, drawing closer, he whispered: "Tell me, is it a fact?"

"What?"

"That General Bonaparte passed through here yesterday on his way from Lyons?"

"I think there must be something in the news, for this is the second time I have heard it. Oh, I understand now why all those good persons stared at me so, and seemed to want to question me. They are like you, Father Cour-

tois, — they want to know what General Bonaparte's arrival signifies."

"You don't know what they say, then, Monsieur Louis?"

"They say a good deal, Father Courtois."

"They say something this time, but they say it softly."

"What is it?"

"They say that he has come to claim from the Directory the throne of his Majesty Louis XVIII., in order to put him upon it; and that if Citizen Gohier, as president, does not give it to him willingly, he will take it by force."

"Bah!" said the young officer, with mocking incredulity.

But father Courtois insisted with a nod.

"It is possible," said the young man; "but now that you know me, will you open the gate?"

"Open it? I should think so! What the devil am I thinking of?" And the turnkey opened the door with an eagerness which contrasted forcibly with his former reluctance.

The young man entered, and Sir John followed him. The turnkey secured the gate carefully, and led the way. Roland followed him, and Sir John came last. The latter was growing accustomed to his young friend's vagaries. Spleen is nothing but misanthropy, without the ill-humor of Timon and the wit of Alceste.

The jailer crossed the prison yard, which was separated from the palace of justice by a wall fifteen feet high, in the midst of which was a passage that turned back for a few feet, where there was a massive oak door, by means of which prisoners could be taken into the adjoining building without passing through the street. The yard being crossed, they came to the left angle of the court,

where a winding staircase led to the interior of the prison. We give these details because later we propose to revisit these scenes, and they will then not be entirely unfamiliar to our readers. The staircase led first to the anteroom of the prison, a room which was appropriated to the porter, or door-keeper; from this room there was a stairway of ten steps, which led down to an outer court, separated from that of the prisoners by a wall similar to the one already described, except that it was pierced by three doors; at the extremity of this court a passage led to the jailer's room, and from there a second corridor led directly to the cells, which were picturesquely called "cages." The jailer stopped at the first of these cages, and tapped upon the door.

"This is the place," he said, "where I put your mother and sister; so that if the dear ladies needed Charlotte or me, they had only to knock."

"Is there any one in the cell?"

"No."

"Then do me the favor to open the door. This is Lord Tanlay, who is making the tour of France to see whether the prisons here are any better than those of England."

And as Father Courtois opened the door, Roland pushed Sir John into a cell ten or twelve feet square.

"Oh," said the Englishman, "what a gloomy place!"

"Do you think so? Well, my lord, this is the place where my mother, the best woman that ever lived, and my sister, whom you know, passed six weeks, with the prospect of leaving it only for the guillotine. That was five years ago, and my sister was barely twelve years old."

"But what crime had they committed?"

"Oh, an enormous one! At the anniversary fête given by the city of Bourg at the death of the Friend of the

people, my mother refused to allow my sister to be one of the virgins who were to carry the urns containing the tears of France. How can we blame her? Poor woman! she thought she had done enough for her country since she had offered up the blood of her son and her husband, — the one in Italy and the other in Germany, — but she was mistaken; the country claimed her daughter's tears; and what made her refusal worse, she gave it when those tears were required for Citizen Marat. The result was that on the very evening of the fête, in the midst of the enthusiasm, my mother was arrested. Fortunately, Bourg was not as rapid about these things as Paris, and a friend of ours who was in authority contrived to delay the affair until one fine day we heard of the fall and death of Robespierre. That was an interruption to many things; and among others, to the executions. Our friend in authority gave the tribunal to understand that clemency was the order of the day. They waited one week, then two; and finally they told my mother and sister that they were free.

"And so you see, my friend," continued Roland, "and this gives rise to many philosophical reflections, — if Mademoiselle Teresa Cabarrus had not come from Spain to France; if she had not married M. de Fontenoy, counsellor to parliament; if she had not been arrested and brought before the proconsul Tallien, son of the steward of the Marquis de Bercy, ex-clerk of the solicitor, ex-overseer of the printing-house, ex-copying clerk, ex-secretary of the commune of Paris, just then on an embassy to Bordeaux; if the ex-consul had not fallen in love with her; if she had not been imprisoned; if, on the 9th Thermidor, she had not sent a poniard to him with these words: 'If the tyrant does not die to-day, I die to-morrow;' if Saint-Just had not been interrupted in the

middle of his speech; if Robespierre had not had a frog in his throat that very day; if Garnier de l'Aube had not exclaimed, 'It is Danton's blood which is strangling you!' if Louchet had not demanded his arrest; if he had not been arrested, rescued by the commune, and again taken, had his jaw broken by a pistol-shot, and been executed the next day, — my mother would in all probability have had her throat cut because she would not permit her daughter to weep for Marat in one of the dozen urns for which the city of Bourg was obliged to provide tears. Farewell, Courtois; you are a good fellow; you gave my mother and sister a little water to put with their wine, and a little hope to put in their hearts; you lent them your daughter, so that they need not sweep their cell themselves; you deserve a fortune. Unfortunately I am not rich; but I have fifty louis about me, and here they are. Come, my lord."

And the young man drew Sir John after him, before the jailer had had time to recover from his surprise enough to thank Roland or refuse the fifty louis, — which latter, it must be confessed, would have been a tremendous proof of disinterestedness on the part of a jailer; above all, when that jailer's opinions were contrary to those of the government he served.

When Roland and Sir John came out of the prison they found the Place des Lices filled with people who had heard of General Bonaparte's return to France, and who were shouting with all their might "Long live Bonaparte!" — some of them because they really admired the conqueror of Arcole, Rivoli, and the Pyramids; and others because, like Courtois, they had been told that the general had made his conquests only for the benefit of his Majesty Louis XVIII.

This time, as Roland and Sir John had visited every-

thing of note in the town of Bourg, they at last took the road to Noires-Fontaines, where they arrived without any further delay.

Mme. de Montrevel and Amélie had gone out. Roland installed his friend in an armchair, and asked him to wait a few moments for him. At the end of five minutes he returned, holding in his hand a pamphlet badly printed on gray paper.

"My friend," he said, "you seemed to doubt the authenticity of the fête of which I was telling you just now, which nearly cost my mother and sister their lives; so I have brought you the programme of it. While you are reading it, I will go and see what has become of my dogs; for I suppose you would prefer to give up the day's fishing, and go hunting instead."

And he went out, leaving in Sir John's hand the order of the municipality of the town of Bourg for a funeral fête in honor of Marat, to be held on the anniversary of his death.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BOAR.

Sir John had finished his interesting task when Mme. de Montrevel and her daughter returned.

Amélie, who did not know that she had been the subject of conversation between her brother and Sir John, was astonished at the expression with which that gentleman fixed his eyes on her. She seemed to him to be more beautiful than ever. He could easily understand how the mother, at the peril of her life, had refused to allow this charming creature to profane her youth and beauty by taking a prominent part in a fête of which Marat was the god. He remembered the cold and damp cell which he had visited only an hour ago, and shuddered at the idea that this white and delicate creature had been shut up there for six weeks without fresh air or sunshine. He looked at her neck, slender and graceful as that of a swan, and thought of what the poor Princess of Lamballe had said, as she clasped her fingers around her own: "It will not give the executioner much trouble!"

These thoughts so altered Sir John's expression that Mme. de Montrevel could not help asking him what was the matter with him. He then related to her his visit to the prison, and to the cell which they had formerly inhabited.

Just as Sir John finished his story, a bugle sounded a

call to the chase, and Roland entered, his horn at his mouth; but removing it immediately, he said: "Sir John, you must be grateful to my mother; for, thanks to her, we shall have a magnificent hunt to-morrow."

"Thanks to me?" repeated Mme. de Montrevel, inquiringly.

"How is that?" said Sir John.

"I left you to go and see my dogs, did I not?"

"So you said, at least."

"I had two, Barbichon and Ravaude, — two excellent animals, male and female."

"Oh," said Sir John, "are they dead?"

"Well, yes; but this excellent mother of mine" — here he put his hands on Mme. de Montrevel's head, and kissed her upon both cheeks — "has not allowed a single one of their little ones to be drowned, because they were the dogs of my dogs; and now the children, grand-children, and great-grand-children of Barbichon and Ravaude are as numerous as the descendants of Ishmael, and instead of one pair of hounds I have a whole pack, — twenty-five of them, all of the same breed; all of them black, with white paws and fiery eyes, and a regiment of trumpet tails that it would do you good to look at."

And Roland sounded a fresh blast upon his horn, which brought his young brother to the spot.

"Oh," cried the boy, as he entered, "you are going hunting to-morrow, Roland; I am going too! I am going too! I am going too!"

"Good!" said Roland; "do you know what we are going to hunt?"

"No; but I know that I am going."

"We are going to hunt wild boars."

"Oh, how splendid!" exclaimed the boy, clapping his hands.

"You are crazy," said Mme. de Montrevel, turning pale.

"And why, Mamma, if you please?"

"Because a wild-boar hunt is a very dangerous thing."

"Not as dangerous as hunting men. You see my brother has come back alive from that, and I shall come back from the other."

"Roland," said Mme. de Montrevel, while Amélie, lost in thought, took no part in the discussion, "make the boy listen to reason; tell him he is talking nonsense."

But Roland, who seemed to see his own boyhood renewed in his brother, instead of blaming him, smiled at his childish courage. "I would like to take you very much," he said; "but before you go hunting, you must at least know what a gun is."

"Oho!" returned Edward, "just come into the garden, and put your hat a hundred paces off, and I will show you whether I know what a gun is."

"You wretched boy!" cried Mme. de Montrevel, trembling, "where did you learn?"

"At the armorer's in Montagnat, where Papa's and brother Roland's guns are. You have asked me sometimes what I did with my money, have you not? Well, I bought powder and balls with it, and I have been learning to kill Austrians and Arabs, just like brother Roland."

Mme. de Montrevel lifted her hands in dismay.

"What would you have, Mother?" said Roland. "It is bred in the bone. A Montrevel cannot fear powder. You may come with us to-morrow, Edward."

The child sprang to his brother's neck.

"And I will arm you for the hunt," said Sir John. "I have a charming little rifle which I will give you, and

which will help you to be patient until your pistols and sword arrive."

"There," said Roland, "are you satisfied, Edward?"

"Yes; but when will you give it to me? If you must write to England for it, I warn you that I shall not believe in it."

"No, my young friend, we have only to go up to my room and open my gun-box; you see that will not take long."

"Then let us come up to your room at once."

"Come on," replied Sir John. And he went out, followed by Edward.

A moment later, Amélie, still thoughtful, also rose and went out.

Neither Mme. de Montrevel nor Roland paid any attention to her departure; they were engaged in a grave discussion. Mme. de Montrevel was trying to persuade Roland not to take his young brother hunting, and Roland was explaining to her that as Edward was destined to be a soldier, like his father and brother, the sooner he became accustomed to powder and balls the better. The discussion was not yet finished when Edward returned, with his rifle slung over his shoulder.

"Look, brother," he said to Roland, "see the beautiful present my lord has given me!" And he threw a grateful glance towards Sir John, who was looking around the room in a vain search for Amélie.

It was, in truth, a magnificent gift. The weapon, made with the absence of ornament and the simplicity of form peculiar to the English, was beautifully finished. Like the pistols, as Roland at once noticed, it was from the workshops of Menton, and carried a 24-calibre ball. It must have been made for a lady; this was easily to be seen by the short length of the butt-end and the velvet

cushion; it was therefore a perfect weapon for a lad of a dozen years.

Roland took the rifle from Edward and examined it lovingly, moving the hammers, putting it to his cheek, tossing it from one hand to the other, and finally handing it to Edward again, saying, "You must thank my lord once more; you have a rifle there fit for a prince. Let us come and try it."

And they all three went out to try the rifle, leaving Mme. de Montrevel as sad as was Thetis when she saw Achilles, from under his woman's dress, draw from its scabbard the sword of Ulysses.

A quarter of an hour later Edward returned triumphant, bringing to his mother a card as big round as a hat, in which he had put ten balls out of twelve. The two men had remained outside to talk and walk in the park.

Mme. de Montrevel listened to the rather boastful recital of Edward's prowess; then she looked at him with the lingering and saintly sadness of mothers to whom glory is no compensation for the blood that it sheds. What an ingrate is the child who sees this look fastened upon him and then forgets it! After a few moments, pressing the boy to her heart, she murmured sobbingly,

"And you also will leave your mother some day?"

"Yes, Mamma," replied the child, "but only to become a general like my father, or an *aide-de-camp* like my brother."

"And to be killed as your father was, and as your brother will perhaps be;" for the strange change in Roland's character had not escaped his mother's notice, and was an added source of uneasiness to her.

Among the things which troubled Mme. de Montrevel were Amélie's pallor and strange preoccupation. Amélie

was seventeen years old, and her youth had been happy and healthy. The death of her father had cast a gloom over it; but the storms of springtime are soon over; her smile, that beautiful sunshine of the dawn of life, had returned, and, like that of Nature, it shone upon the dew of the heart, which we call tears. Then one day, about six months before, Amélie's brow had become saddened and her cheeks pale; and like birds of passage that take flight at the approach of foggy weather, the childish laugh which escaped from the half-open lips and white teeth fled from Amélie's mouth, to return no more.

Mme. de Montrevel had questioned her daughter, but Amélie had denied that anything was the matter; she had made an effort to smile, and then, as a stone thrown into a lake makes circles which gradually die away, the ripples created by maternal uneasiness disappeared little by little from Amélie's face. With her true mother-instinct, Mme. de Montrevel had thought of love; but whom could Amélie love? No one came to the Château of Noires-Fontaines; political troubles had destroyed society, and Amélie never went out alone. Mme. de Montrevel could only conjecture. Roland's return had given her hope for the moment, but it had died away when she saw how Amélie was affected by his arrival. It was not a sister, but a spectre, which had appeared to him.

Since her son's arrival, Mme. de Montrevel had not lost sight of Amélie, and she had been pained to observe the effect which the presence of the young officer seemed to produce upon his sister; it was almost fright. She whose eyes had formerly held nothing but love when they had gazed upon Roland, now seemed to look at him almost with terror. Only a little while ago, Amélie had profited by the first moment of liberty which had been afforded her to go up to her room, the sole place in the house

where she seemed to find any happiness, and where for the last six months she had passed the greater part of her time. The dinner-bell alone had power to bring her down again, and it was not until the second stroke that she entered the dining-room.

Roland and Sir John had passed the day at Bourg, as we have seen, and in making preparations for the next day's hunt. From morning until noon they were to have a battue, and from noon to evening they were to hunt on horseback.

Michel, a desperate poacher, confined to his chair by a sprain, as Edward had told his brother, felt better when he found there was to be a hunt, and had himself got upon the horse that served to do the errands for the house, in order to go and engage the beaters of St.-Just and Montagnac. Since he himself could neither beat the woods nor hunt, he was to stay with the pack, and with the horses of Sir John and Roland, and Edward's pony, in the centre of the forest, which was only crossed by one road and two practicable paths. The beaters, who could not follow a horseback hunt, were to return to the château at noon with the game that had been slain.

The next day, at six o'clock in the morning, the beaters were at the door. Michel was not to start with the dogs and horses until eleven o'clock.

The Château of Noires-Fontaines was on the very borders of the forest of Seillon; they could therefore begin to hunt as soon as they were outside the gate. As the battue promised principally deer and hares, they were to use shot-guns for it. Roland gave Edward a single-barrelled gun which he had himself used when a boy, and with which he had done his first shooting. He had not yet sufficient confidence in the prudence of the boy to trust him with a double-barrelled gun. As for the weapon

which Sir John had given him on the previous night, it was a rifled carbine, and could only carry bullets. It had therefore been confided to Michel's care; and in case they shot at a boar, it was to be given back to the boy for the second part of the hunt. For this latter part of the sport Roland and Sir John also were to change their weapons, and were armed with double-barrelled rifles and hunting-knives pointed like poniards and sharp as razors, which made part of Sir John's arsenal, and which could be hung at the side or fixed as bayonets in the rifles.

The first battue showed that the chase would be a good one, for they killed a deer and two hares. At noon three deer, seven roe-bucks, and two foxes had been killed. They had seen two boars; but the only effect a shower of large shot had had upon them had been to make them shake themselves and disappear. Edward was perfectly happy: he had killed a deer.

As had been agreed, the beaters, well paid for their trouble, had been sent back to the château with the game. They sounded a cornet, for the sake of learning Michel's whereabouts, and he replied. In less than ten minutes the three hunters had found the gardener, the pack of hounds, and the horses.

Michel had seen a boar; his eldest son had turned him, and he was then in an enclosure about a hundred feet from the hunters. Jacques, Michel's son, beat about the enclosure with the leaders of the pack, and at the end of ten minutes the boar made for his lair. They could easily have killed him then, but the hunt would have been over too soon; they therefore let loose the whole pack upon the animal, who, seeing the troop of pygmies darting upon him, set off at a trot. Roland saw him crossing the road, and sounded his horn; then, as the animal started towards the monastery of Seillon, the three horsemen went along

the path which led through the woods in the same direction.

The animal was driven back and forth until about five o'clock in the evening, doubling on his tracks, and seeming loath to leave a wood so full of thickets. But at last they knew, by the baying of the dogs, that the boar had turned upon them.

The hunters were about a hundred paces from the pavilion belonging to the charter-house, at one of the most difficult places in the forest to penetrate. It was impossible to force their way through on horseback, and they therefore dismounted. The baying of the dogs guided the hunters, and they were able to keep a straight course, except where natural obstacles obliged them to turn aside. From time to time cries of pain showed that one of the dogs had ventured too near, and had received the reward of his temerity.

At about twenty paces from the spot where this energetic drama was taking place, they began to catch a glimpse of the actors in it. The boar was crouching before a rock, in such a way that he could not be attacked from behind. Resting upon his front paws, he turned to the dogs his head, with its reddened eyes and its two enormous weapons. The dogs moved before him, around him, above him, like a waving carpet. Five or six, more or less dangerously wounded, were staining the battle-field with blood; but they did not cease their attacks upon the boar, and showed a courage at which many brave men might have taken example.

Edward, the most imprudent of the hunters, and at the same time the smallest, was enabled by his short stature to force his way through the bushes more readily than the others, and was the first to arrive; Roland, careless of every kind of danger, seeking it rather than shunning it,

came next; and Sir John, slower, graver, less impulsive, came third.

When the boar perceived the hunters, he seemed to pay no further attention to the dogs. His eyes, fixed and bloody, were fastened upon the new arrivals, and his only movement was to grind his jaws together with a menacing noise.

Roland looked for a moment at the spectacle, with an evident desire to throw himself into the midst of the fray, hunting-knife in hand, and to cut the boar's throat, as a butcher slays a calf or a pig.

The movement was so apparent that Sir John caught him by the arm, and Edward cried, "Oh, brother! let me shoot the boar!"

Roland drew back. "Well, yes," he said, leaning his gun against a tree, and standing armed only with his hunting-knife, which he drew from its sheath, "you may shoot him; ready!"

"Oh, be quiet!" said the boy, with clenched teeth and a pale but resolute face, as he raised his rifle to a level with the animal.

"If he misses, or only wounds him," observed Sir John, "you know the animal will be upon us before we have time to see him."

"I know it, my lord; but I am familiar with this kind of hunting," replied Roland, with dilating nostrils, burning eyes, and parted lips. "Fire, Edward!"

The report followed the command instantly; but with the report, perhaps even before it, the animal, like a flash of lightning, had sprung upon the child. There was a second shot; but through the smoke they could see the gleaming eyes of the boar. As he sprang, however, he encountered Roland, who was on one knee, with his hunting-knife in his hand.

For a moment a confused and shapeless group rolled upon the ground. Then a third shot was heard, followed by a burst of laughter from Roland. "A waste of powder and ball, my lord," he cried; "do you not see that the animal is dead? But help me to get rid of his body; the fellow weighs at least four hundred, and is stifling me."

But before Sir John could stoop, Roland, by a vigorous movement of his shoulders, had shoved the body of the animal one side, and risen, covered with blood, but without a scratch. Edward, whether from want of time or from courage, had not retreated a step. It is true that he had been completely protected by the body of his brother, which had been thrust before him. Sir John had leaped one side, to get a shot at the animal's flank, and he now looked at Roland, as he shook himself after this second duel, much as he had looked at him after the first.

Those of the dogs that remained, and there were about twenty of them, had followed the boar and flung themselves upon his body, trying vainly to tear the skin all bristling with quills, which made an armor almost as impenetrable as steel.

"You will see," said Roland, wiping the blood from his face and hands with a fine linen handkerchief, "that they will eat him, and your knife with him."

"My knife?" repeated Sir John.

"It is sheathed in him," said Roland.

"Ah," said the boy, "there is nothing to be seen of it but the handle."

Darting towards the animal, Edward pulled out the knife, which was, as he had said, buried in the flesh up to the hilt. The sharp weapon, directed by a cool eye and held by a strong hand, had gone straight to the heart.

There were three other wounds on the boar's body. The first, which had been made by the boy's weapon, was indicated by a bloody furrow traced above the eye, the ball having had too little force to pierce the skull. The second came from Sir John's first shot; the ball had glanced along the animal's side. The third had gone through his body, after he was dead.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN UNPOPULAR ERRAND.

THE chase was finished, and night had fallen; the next thing was to get back to the château. The horses were only about fifty feet away; their impatient neighings could be distinctly heard, seeming to ask if their riders had doubted their courage in not allowing them to take part in the fray.

Edward was determined to drag the boar to them, load it upon the saddle, and take it to the château; but Roland persuaded him that it would be much simpler to send two men with a litter for it. This was also Sir John's opinion, and Edward, who was constantly pointing to the wound in the head, and saying, "That was my shot! I did that!" was forced to yield to the majority.

The three hunters regained their horses, mounted them, and in less than ten minutes reached the Château of Noires-Fontaines.

Mme. de Montrevel was on the steps, watching for them. The poor mother had been there for more than an hour, trembling lest some harm had befallen one or the other of her sons. As soon as Edward saw her, he started at a gallop, shouting through the gate, —

"Mamma, we have killed a boar as big as a donkey. I shot him in the head; you can see the place where my ball went. Roland stuck his hunting-knife in him up to the hilt; my lord shot him twice. Quick! quick! send some men for him! Don't be frightened because

Roland is all covered with blood; it is the animal's blood. Roland has not a scratch."

All this was said with Edward's habitual volubility, while Mme. de Montrevel hurriedly crossed the space between the house and the road, and opened the gate. She wanted to lift Edward down, but he leaped to the ground first, and from there clung to her neck. Roland and Sir John arrived just then, and at the same moment Amélie appeared upon the doorstep.

Edward left his mother mourning over Roland, who, all covered with blood as he was, was a fearful object, and ran to tell his sister the same story which he had related to his mother. Amélie listened to it in an absent-minded way, which doubtless wounded Edward's self-love, for he soon ran down to the kitchen to tell Michel, who was sure to be a good listener.

Michel was, in fact, highly interested; but when Edward, who had described the place where the boar lay, told him that Roland wanted to send some men to get the animal, he shook his head.

"What!" exclaimed Edward, "would you refuse to obey my brother?"

"God forbid, Master Edward! and Jacques shall start instantly for Montagnac."

"Are you afraid he will not find any one?"

"Oh, he could find ten men as easy as one; but the trouble is the time of night and the place where it lies. You say it is near the pavilion of the charter-house?"

"Not twenty steps away."

"I would rather it were a league away," returned Michel, shaking his head. "But never mind; we will send for them without telling them where or why; and when they get here, we will leave it to your brother to persuade them."

"All right! let them come. I will persuade them myself."

"Oh," groaned Michel, "if I did not have this plaguy sprain I would go myself; but the trip to-day has not done me any good. Jacques! Jacques!"

Jacques came. Edward stayed not only while the order was given to the young man to go to Montagnac, but until he had fairly gone. Then he went upstairs to follow Roland and Sir John's example, — to make his toilet.

As might have been expected, the conversation at table was entirely about the day's adventures. Edward asked no better fun than to talk about them; and Sir John, amazed at Roland's courage, skill, and luck, supplemented Edward's story.

Mme. de Montrevel trembled at each detail, and yet insisted upon hearing them twenty times. The clearest detail that she gathered from it all was that Roland had saved Edward's life.

"Have you thanked him?" she asked the boy.

"Whom?"

"Your brother."

"What for?" demanded Edward. "Would n't I have done the same thing in his place?"

"What will you have, madam?" said Sir John. "You are a gazelle, and you have unwittingly given birth to a race of lions."

Amélie had listened attentively to the story, particularly when she found that the hunters had been near the monastery. From that moment she had listened uneasily, scarcely drawing a long breath until she heard that the hunters, having no reason to proceed farther after the boar's death, had returned to their horses.

After dinner it was announced that Jacques had returned from Montagnac with two peasants, who wanted to

know the exact spot where the animal had been left. Roland rose to tell them, but Mme. de Montrevel, who could not bear to lose sight of her son, said, turning towards the servant, —

"Let the men come in here; it is useless to disturb yourself for that."

Five minutes later the two peasants entered, twisting their caps in their hands.

"My men," said Roland, "I want you to go to the forest of Seillon to get a boar that we have killed."

"That can be done," said one of the peasants; and he looked questioningly at his companion.

"Yes, we can do that," said the other.

"You may rest assured," said Roland, "that you will not have your trouble for nothing."

"Oh, we don't worry about that," replied one of the men; "we know you, Monsieur de Montrevel."

"Yes," said the other, "we know that you don't make persons work for nothing, any more than your father did. If all the aristocrats had been like you, there would have been no revolution, Monsieur Louis."

"No, indeed, there would not have been any," said the other, who seemed to be there for the purpose of echoing everything his companion said.

"Now, it only remains to hear where the animal is," said the first peasant.

"Yes, we must hear where it is," repeated the second.

"Oh, it will not be difficult to find."

"So much the better."

"You know where the pavilion in the forest is?"

"Which one?"

"Yes, which one?"

"The one belonging to the charter-house of Seillon."

The two peasants looked at each other.

"Well, you will find it about twenty steps from the front of the pavilion, on the Genoud side of the wood."

The two peasants looked at each other again.

"Hum!" said one.

"Hum!" repeated his faithful echo.

"What do you mean by 'hum'?" asked Roland.

"Well —"

"Come, explain yourselves; what is the matter?"

"We should be a great deal better pleased if it had been at the other end of the forest."

"Why?"

"That's so," said the other peasant.

"But why at the other end of the forest?" repeated Roland, impatiently; "it is three leagues from here to the other end of the forest, while you have scarcely a league to go to the place where the boar is."

"Yes," said the first peasant, "but the place where the boar is —" And he hesitated and shook his head.

"Just so!" said the second.

"Just what?"

"It is a little too near the monastery."

"I did not say the monastery; I said the pavilion."

"It is all the same. You know, Monsieur Louis, that there is an underground passage which goes from the monastery to the pavilion."

"Oh, there is one, surely," echoed the other man.

"Well," said Roland, "and what have the pavilion, the monastery, and the underground passage to do with our boar?"

"The animal is in a bad place."

"Yes, a bad place," repeated the second peasant.

"Will you explain yourselves, you rascals?" exclaimed Roland, growing angry, while his mother began to get uneasy, and Amélie paled visibly.

"I beg your pardon, Monsieur Louis," said the peasant, "we are not rascals; we are God-fearing people, that 's all."

"Confound it all!" exclaimed Roland, "I fear God, too. What of it?"

"We don't care to have any dealings with the devil."

"No, no, no," said the second peasant.

"With his own kind," continued the peasant, "one man is as good as another."

"Sometimes better," supplemented his companion.

"But with supernatural beings, phantoms, and spectres — no, I thank you!" continued the first peasant.

"No, I thank you," repeated the second.

"Mamma, sister," asked Roland, addressing the two ladies, "in the name of Heaven, do you understand what these two idiots are saying?"

"Idiots!" repeated the first peasant, "perhaps so; but it is none the less true that Pierre Marey got his back wrenched just for looking over the monastery wall. To be sure it was on a Saturday, which is the witches' Sabbath."

"And they have never been able to twist it back again," affirmed the other peasant; "so that he has to carry his face backwards, and look at what passes behind him."

"Oh," said Sir John, "this is getting interesting. I like ghost stories."

"My sister Amélie does not seem to be of the same opinion," said Edward.

"What do you mean?"

"Look, brother Roland, how pale she is!"

"Mademoiselle certainly seems to be ill," said Sir John.

"I! not at all," said Amélie. "But do you not think it is rather warm here, Mamma?" And Amélie wiped her forehead, which was covered with perspiration.

"No," replied Mme. de Montrevel.

"However," persisted Amélie, "if I did not fear to make you uncomfortable, I should ask permission to open a window."

"Do so, my child."

Amélie rose quickly to take advantage of the permission, and, almost tottering, went to open a window overlooking the garden. When she had opened it, she remained leaning upon the sill, half hidden by the curtains.

"Ah," she said, "here, at least, one can breathe."

Sir John rose to offer her his salts, but she said quickly, —

"No, no, my lord, I thank you; but I am much better."

"Well, well," said Roland, "the question is, what about our boar?"

"We will go and get your boar to-morrow, Monsieur Louis."

"That's so," said the second peasant. "To-morrow morning it will be daylight."

"And if you went this evening — "

"Oh, to go this evening — "

The peasant looked at his companion, and they both shook their heads.

"We can't go this evening."

"Cowards!"

"Monsieur Louis, it is not cowardice to be afraid," said the first peasant.

"No, that is not cowardice," said the second.

"Ah," said Roland, "I should like to have some one besides you prove to me that it was not cowardice to be afraid."

"Well, it is according to the thing one is afraid of,

Monsieur Louis; if any one should give me a good hedging-bill and a club, I should not be afraid of a wolf; if any one should give me a good gun, I should not be afraid of a man, even though I should know that man was trying to assassinate me."

"Yes," said Edward; "but you are afraid of a ghost, even though it were the ghost of a monk."

"Little Monsieur Edward," said the peasant, "let your brother speak; you are not old enough yet to joke about these things."

"No," added the other peasant; "wait until you have a beard on your chin, my little master."

"I have no beard on my chin," replied Edward, drawing himself up; "but for all that, if I were strong enough to carry the boar, I would go alone and get him, whether it were day or night."

"You may do it if you like, my young master; but my mate and I would not do it for a louis."

"Would you do it for two?" asked Roland, to try them.

"Neither for two nor for four nor for ten, Monsieur de Montrevel. Ten louis are good, but what should I do with ten louis if I had a twisted neck?"

"Yes, a twisted neck like Pierre Marey," added the other peasant.

"Your ten louis would not feed my wife and children for the rest of their days, would they?"

"And then again, when you say ten louis, it means really only five," added the other peasant; "because you know I should have five of them."

"Then there are ghosts in the pavilion?" asked Roland.

"I did not say in the pavilion, — I am not sure about the pavilion, — but in the charter-house — "

"You are sure there are some in the charter-house?"

"Oh, yes, certainly."

"Have you seen them?"

"I have n't, but there are those who have."

"Your mate here?" asked the young officer, turning towards the second peasant.

"I have not seen the ghosts, but I have seen flames; and Claud Philippon has heard chains."

"Ah, there are flames and chains, then?"

"Yes; and I have seen the flames myself," said the first peasant.

"And Claud Philippon has heard the chains," repeated the other.

"Very well, my friends, very well," said Roland, mockingly; "then you will not go this evening at any price?"

"Not at any price."

"Not for all the gold in the world."

"And you will go to-morrow by daylight?"

"Monsieur Louis, before you are up in the morning the boar shall be here."

"It will be here before you are up," repeated the echo.

"Well," said Roland, "come and see me the day after to-morrow."

"Certainly, Monsieur Louis; what do you want us to do?"

"Never mind; come."

"Oh, we will come."

"Any time that you say 'come,' you will not expect us in vain, Monsieur Louis."

"Well, I will give you some news then."

"What about?"

"The ghosts."

Amélie uttered a stifled cry, which Mme. de Montrevel alone heard. Roland shook hands with the two peasants,

who ran against each other at the door, where they both tried to go out at once.

There was no more talk during the rest of the evening, either of the charter-house, the pavilion, or the supernatural guests, whether spectres or ghosts, that haunted them.

CHAPTER XV.

A STRONG MIND.

When ten o'clock sounded, each one in the Château of Noires-Fontaines had gone to bed, or at least retired to his room.

Two or three times during the evening, Amélie had approached Roland, as if she had something to say to him; but each time the words had died upon her lips. When they left the salon, she was leaning on his arm, and although Roland's room was on the floor above her own, she went with him to his very door. Roland kissed her good-night and shut the door, saying that he was very tired.

However, in spite of this declaration, Roland, after he entered his room, did not proceed with his preparations for bed; he went to the place where he kept his weapons, drew out a magnificent pair of pistols from the manufactory of Versailles, which had been given to his father by the Convention, worked the hammers, and blew down the barrels to see that there were no old loads in them. They were in excellent condition. After which, he placed them side by side on the table, softly opened the door of his room, looked towards the staircase to see if any one were watching, and finding that corridor and staircase were deserted, he went and knocked at Sir John's door.

"Come in!" said the Englishman. Sir John had not begun his preparations for bed, either. "I understood, from a sign you made me," said Sir John, "that you had

something to say to me, and as you see, I waited for you."

"Certainly I have something to tell you," said Roland, gayly, stretching himself out in an armchair.

"My friend," said the Englishman, "I am beginning to know you; when I see you as gay as that, I am like your peasants, — I am afraid."

"You heard what they said?"

"You mean their magnificent ghost-story? I have a place in England where ghosts come sometimes."

"Did you ever see them, my lord?"

"Yes, when I was a little fellow; unfortunately, by the time I had grown up the ghosts had disappeared."

"That 's the way with ghosts," said Roland, gayly; "they go and come. Was I not fortunate to get home just as there are ghosts in the monastery of Seillon?"

"Yes," said Sir John, "it was very fortunate; but are you sure there are any there?"

"No; but by day after to-morrow I shall know what to think."

"What do you mean?"

"I intend to pass to-morrow night there."

"Oh, will you allow me to accompany you?"

"I should be very glad to have you, my lord; but unfortunately it will be impossible."

"Impossible? why?"

"Are you acquainted with the peculiarities of ghosts, my lord?" asked Roland, gravely.

"No."

"Well, I am. Ghosts will not show themselves except under certain conditions."

"What are they?"

"Well, for example, in Italy and Spain, which are essentially superstitious countries, they don't have a ghost once in ten, twenty, a hundred years."

"And how do you account for the absence of ghosts among them?"

"I attribute it to the lack of fogs, my lord."

"Ah!"

"Not a doubt of it. You see the atmosphere of ghosts is fog. In Scotland, Denmark, and England, countries that are always foggy, they are surfeited with ghosts. There is the ghost of Hamlet's father, the ghost of Banquo, the ghosts of the victims of Richard III. In Italy they have only one ghost, that of Cæsar; and where did he appear to Brutus? At Philippi in Macedonia, and in Thrace, which is the Denmark of Greece, the Scotland of the Orient, where the fog made Ovid so melancholy that he entitled his very verses 'Tristes.' Why did Virgil make the ghost of Anchises appear to Æneas? Because Virgil was from Mantua. Do you know Mantua? — a country of marshes, a regular fen, a manufactory of rheumatism, an atmosphere of vapors, — consequently a hotbed of ghosts."

"Go on, I am listening."

"Have you seen the borders of the Rhine?"

"Yes."

"In Germany, is it not?"

"Yes."

"Another country of fairies, undines, sylphs, and consequently ghosts, since the greater includes the less, and every bit of it caused by fogs. But in Italy or Spain, where would the ghosts take refuge? There is not the least little bit of fog there. And therefore if I were in Spain or Italy, I should not even attempt to-morrow night's adventure."

"But all this does not explain why you refuse my company," insisted Sir John.

"Wait. I have explained to you why ghosts do not

venture into certain countries, for want of certain atmospheric conditions; now let me explain what must be done, if one would see them."

"Explain! explain!" said Sir John. "I would rather hear you talk than any one I know."

Sir John stretched himself out on a sofa, and prepared to enjoy the improvisations of the fantastic mind which he had already seen under so many aspects during the last few days.

Roland bowed his thanks. "Well, I will tell you. I have heard so much about ghosts in my life that I know the rogues as well as if I had made them. Why do ghosts show themselves?"

"Do you ask me that?" said Sir John.

"Yes, I ask you."

"I must confess that, not having made a study of ghosts like yourself, I am not in a position to give you a positive answer."

"My dear lord, ghosts show themselves for the purpose of frightening the people to whom they appear."

"Not a doubt of it."

"And if they do not frighten those to whom they appear, they are frightened by them. There is M. de Turenne, for example, whose ghosts turned out to be impostors. Did you ever hear that story?"

"No."

"I will tell it to you some day; we will not bother with it now. That is the reason that when they do make up their minds to appear, which is very seldom, they choose stormy nights, with thunder, lightning, and wind; that is their stage-setting."

"You certainly must be right."

"Wait; there are moments when the bravest will feel cold shivers. Before I had an aneurism, I felt them my-

self, many times, when I saw the flash of sabres over my head, and heard in my ears the thunder of cannon. To be sure, since I have had this aneurism I have sought the flash of steel and the roar of cannon; but there is a chance that the ghosts may not know this fact, and that they may think I will be afraid of them."

"While it is impossible that you should be, is it not?" said Sir John.

"How can it be otherwise? When instead of fearing death a man believes, whether right or wrong, that he has a reason for seeking it, there is no occasion for him to be afraid; but, as I said, it is possible that the ghosts, although they know a great deal, may not know this. But there is one thing that they do know; and that is, that external objects have a great deal to do with augmenting or diminishing fear. For example, where do ghosts prefer to appear? Why, in out-of-the-way places, in cemeteries, in old cloisters, in ruins, in subterranean passages, because the very sight of these localities predisposes the mind to fear. By what is their appearance heralded? By the rattling of chains, by groanings, by sighs, because there is nothing cheerful about all this. They take good care not to appear in the midst of a brilliant light, or after dance-music; no, fear is an abyss to which a man descends step by step, until vertigo seizes him, his foot slips, and he falls with closed eyes to the foot of the precipice. Read the history of all ghosts, and you will see how they proceed: at first the sky is obscured, the thunder rolls, the wind howls, the doors and windows creak, and the lamp, if there be one, flickers, pales, and dies. Complete obscurity! in the midst of which comes the sound of wails, groans, and clanking chains. Finally the door opens and the ghost appears. All the apparitions that I have read about have been pro-

duced under similar circumstances. Am I not right, Sir John?"

"Perfectly."

"And did you ever know a ghost to appear to two persons at once?"

"I don't believe I ever read or heard of such a thing."

"There is a very simple reason for it, my lord: when two persons are together, they are not afraid of anything. Fear is a strange thing independent of the will, and needing isolation, shadows, and solitude. A ghost is not more dangerous than a cannon-ball; and yet a soldier is not afraid of a cannon-ball in daylight, when he has the companionship of his comrades, and can touch elbows with them; he marches straight at the piece, and is either killed or he kills. But that is not what the ghosts want; that is why they never appear to two persons at once. That is why I want to go alone to the monastery, my lord; your presence would prevent the most determined ghost from appearing. If I see nothing, or if I see anything that will pay me for my trouble, you shall have your turn to-morrow. Will that suit you?"

"Perfectly. But why can I not go first?"

"Well, first, because the idea did not occur to you, and being my own I want the benefit of it; in the next place, because I belong to the region, and having known these monks while they were alive, I shall have a better chance of seeing them now; and finally because, being acquainted with localities, if it comes to flight or pursuit I can have a better chance than you in attack or retreat. Are these reasons good ones, my lord?"

"Nothing could be better; but I may go the next night?"

"The next night, and the night after that, and every night and day too, if you want to. What I insist upon is

the first. And now," continued Roland, rising, "this is just between ourselves, is it not? Not a word to any one else; the ghosts might get wind of it, and act accordingly. We must not let the rogues get the better of us; that would be too absurd."

"Make your mind easy about that. You will take weapons, will you not?"

"If I thought I should find only ghosts, I would go with my hands in my pockets; but I can't help remembering M. de Turenne's impostors, and therefore I shall take pistols."

"Do you want mine?"

"No, I thank you. Although those are excellent, I have almost made up my mind never to touch them again." Then with a bitter smile, he added: "They bring me bad luck. Good-night, my lord; I must sleep with all my might to-night, so that I can keep awake to-morrow night."

And after heartily shaking the Englishman's hand, Roland left him and went to his own room. But when he had reached it, he was struck by the fact that his door, which he had closed, was open. When he entered, however, the sight of his sister explained the mystery.

"Why!" he said, half astonished, half uneasy, "is it you, Amélie?"

"Yes, it is I," replied the young girl. Then approaching her brother, and holding up her forehead for him to kiss, she said in a supplicating tone: "You will not go, will you, dear?"

"Go where?" asked Roland.

"To the monastery?"

"Who told you I was going there?"

"Oh, it was not difficult for one who knew you to guess it."

"And why do you not want me to go there?"

"I am afraid that something will happen to you."

"Ah, so you believe in the ghosts?" said Roland, looking keenly at Amélie.

She lowered her eyes, and Roland felt her hand tremble in his.

"See here!" said Roland, "the Amélie whom I used to know, the daughter of General de Montrevel, the sister of Roland, was too intelligent to yield to vulgar terrors. It is not possible that you believe all these stories of ghosts, chains, flames, and apparitions?"

"If I did believe them, dear, my fears would be less great. If ghosts exist, they are disembodied spirits, who could not retain material hates. Now, why should a ghost hate you, Roland, who never did harm to any one?"

"You forgot those whom I have killed in the army, or in duels."

Amélie shook her head.

"I do not fear those."

"What do you fear, then?"

The young girl lifted her beautiful eyes, all filled with tears, to Roland, and throwing her arms around his neck, she said: "I do not know, Roland, but I am afraid."

The young man with gentle violence raised his sister's head from his breast, and kissing her eyelids gently and tenderly, he said: "You do not believe that those whom I shall have to fight to-morrow are ghosts, do you?"

"Brother, do not go to the monastery," repeated Amélie, pleadingly, evading the question.

"Our mother told you to ask this of me, — confess now, Amélie."

"Oh, no! Mamma has not said a word; it was I who guessed that you would go there."

"Well, Amélie," said Roland, firmly, "if I have made

up my mind to go there, you ought to know that I shall go."

"Even if I beg you with clasped hands, brother?" said Amélie, almost piteously; "even if I beg you upon my knees?"

And she sank to the floor at her brother's feet.

"Oh, women! women!" murmured Roland; "inexplicable creatures, whose words are a mystery, whose mouth never reveals the secrets of their hearts, who weep, beg, and tremble — for what? God knows! men don't! I shall go, Amélie, because I have resolved to do so; and when I have once taken a resolution, nothing in the world can shake it. Now kiss me, and fear nothing, and I will tell you a great secret."

Amélie raised her head, and fixed upon Roland a look at once questioning and despairing.

"It is more than a year now," continued her brother, "since I have known that I am unfortunate enough not to be able to die; so cheer up, and don't be uneasy."

Roland pronounced these words so mournfully that Amélie, who until then had been able to restrain her tears, went sobbing to her room.

The young officer, after having assured himself that his sister had shut her door, closed his own, murmuring as he did so, "We will see who will give up first, — I or destiny."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE GHOST.

THE next night, at about the same hour, the young officer, after having assured himself that every one in the château had gone to bed, softly opened his door, descended the staircase with bated breath, gained the vestibule, noiselessly drew the bolts of the door, descended the steps, turned around to assure himself that everything was quiet, and reassured by the darkened windows, advanced to the gate. The hinges had doubtless been oiled during the day, for they turned without the least noise, and the gate closed silently behind him, while he advanced rapidly along the road from Pont-d'Ain to Bourg. Scarcely had he taken a hundred steps when the clock of St.-Just struck once; that of Montagnac replied to it like a brazen echo. It was half-past ten.

So rapidly did the young man walk that it would take him scarcely twenty minutes to reach the charter-house of Seillon, particularly if, instead of going around the wood, he took the path that led directly to the monastery. He had been too familiar from his youth with every path in the forest of Seillon to make a *détour* which would take him ten minutes longer, and he chose unhesitatingly the path through the woods, arriving in five minutes more on the other side of the wood. Once there, he had only to cross a little plain to reach the wall of the orchard belonging to the monastery. It took him scarcely five minutes.

At the foot of the wall Roland stopped, but only for a few seconds. He unfastened his cloak, rolled it into a wad, and threw it over the wall. Without his cloak he was dressed in a velvet coat, white leather breeches, and top-boots. The coat was held close to his body by a belt, in which were stuck two pistols. A broad-brimmed hat covered his face, completely shadowing it.

With the same rapidity with which he had rid himself of the garment which would impede his ascent of the wall, Roland began to scale it. His foot sought a crevice in the stones, which he was not long in finding; he sprang up, seized the coping, and leaped down on the other side without having even touched the top of the wall over which he had sprung. He picked up his cloak, put it over his shoulders, fastened it again, and going through the orchard, reached with long steps a little door, which communicated between the orchard and the cloister. As he crossed the threshold of this little door, eleven o'clock struck.

Roland stopped and counted the strokes, and then slowly made the tour of the monastery, looking and listening. He saw nothing, and heard not the least noise. The monastery was the picture of desolation and solitude; the doors of the cells, the chapel, and the refectory were all open. In the refectory, an immense room where the tables were still standing, Roland saw five or six bats flying about; a frightened screech-owl escaped through a broken window, perched upon a tree a few feet away, and uttered its gloomy cry.

"Good!" said Roland, aloud; "I think I must make my headquarters here; bats and screech-owls are the advance-guard of ghosts."

The sound of the human voice rising in the midst of the solitude, the shadows, and the desolation had something

unusual and mournful about it, which would have been calculated to strike terror to the heart of the speaker if it had not been one who, like Roland, did not know what fear was. He sought some place where he could see the whole room at a glance. An isolated table, placed upon a sort of platform at one of the extremities of the refectory, which had doubtless been used by the superior of the convent either as a place from which to give holy readings during meals, or else to take his own meals separate from the others, seemed to him to possess all the advantages that he sought. Leaning against the wall, he could not be surprised from behind; while, when he once became accustomed to the gloom, he could see all parts of the room at a glance. He next looked about for a seat, and at a few steps from the table he found the overturned stool of the solitary reader. Seating himself before the table, and unfastening his cloak in order to give more freedom to his movements, he took his pistols from his belt, put one before him, and striking three times upon the table with the butt of the other, he said aloud, —

"The *séance* is open, and the spirits may enter."

Those who have been with a companion after nightfall in a cemetery or church, and who have involuntarily lowered their voices, feeling the need of speaking softly and seriously in such places, can alone understand what a strange impression, in the midst of the stillness, that mocking voice would have produced upon one who had chanced to hear it. It vibrated for a moment in the darkness, which seemed to thrill with it; then it grew fainter, and died away without echo, escaping through the apertures made by the wings of Time in his flight.

As Roland had foreseen, his eyes gradually became accustomed to the shadows, and now, thanks to the pale light of the moon, which had just risen, and which shone

into the refectory in long, bluish lines through the broken windows, he could distinctly see from one end of the immense room to the other.

Although Roland was absolutely without fear, he was not without suspicion, and his keen ear caught the slightest noise. He heard the half-hour strike. In spite of himself, the sound sent a shudder through him; it came from the convent church itself. In this ruin, where death reigned supreme, how had a clock, the pulse of time, remained alive?

"Aha!" he said to himself; "that proves that I shall see something."

The words were spoken almost in a whisper; the majesty of the place and the silence had had their effect upon his heart, which was almost as hard as the tongue that had just sent forth that appeal of time against eternity.

The minutes slipped away, one after the other. A cloud must have passed over the moon, for it seemed to Roland that the shadows thickened. Then, as midnight drew near, he fancied he heard a thousand almost imperceptible noises, confused and different, which doubtless came from that nocturnal world that wakes when the other sleeps. Nature desires no suspension of life, even for sleep; she has made her nocturnal universe as she has made her daily world, — from the mosquito humming around the pillow of a sleeping man to the lion roaming about the Arab's tent.

But Roland, the camp sentry, the sentinel in the desert, the hunter and soldier, was well acquainted with all these noises. They were not noticed by him, when suddenly the tones of the clock were added to them, as it rang out for the second time above his head. This time it was midnight; he counted the twelve strokes, one after another. The last one came, trembled upon the air like

a bird with bronze wings, then died away slowly, sadly, mournfully.

At the same time it seemed to Roland that he heard a groan. He listened attentively. He heard it again, nearer. He stood up, with his hands leaning upon the table, the palm of each covering the butt-end of a pistol. He heard a swishing like that made by a long dress trailing over grass. It was at his left, and not ten feet away. He started up, as if moved by a spring. At the same moment a shadow appeared upon the threshold of the immense room. It resembled one of those old statues which are seen upon tombs; it was enveloped in an immense shroud, which trailed behind it.

For a moment Roland doubted his own eyes. Had the preoccupation of his mind caused him to see what was not there? Was he the dupe of his senses, the sport of those hallucinations which medicine acknowledges but cannot explain? A groan uttered by the apparition caused his doubts to vanish.

"Ah, upon my word!" he exclaimed, bursting out laughing; "how are you, friend ghost?"

The spectre stopped, and extended its hand towards the young officer. "Roland! Roland!" it said, in dull tones, "it were a pity to pursue the dead even to the tombs which you have caused them to enter." And it continued on its way without hastening its steps.

Roland, for a moment astonished, descended from his platform and began a resolute chase after the ghost. It was difficult to make headway, encumbered as the place was with stones, overturned benches, and tables. But it seemed as though an invisible path was traced for the spectre among all these obstacles, for it walked steadily on without stopping. Each time it passed before a window the outside light, feeble though it was, reflected upon the

shroud and outlined the spectre, which, when the window was passed, was lost in the obscurity, only to reappear again, and be again lost.

Roland, with his eyes fixed upon the figure before him, fearing to lose it if he ceased to look at it, could not keep watch of the heaped up obstacles before him. At each step he stumbled, and the phantom gained upon him. It reached the door opposite that by which it had entered. Roland saw the entrance to a dark corridor, and feared that the spectre was about to escape him.

"Man or spectre, thief or monk," he said, "halt, or I fire!"

"You cannot kill the same body twice, and death has no hold upon the soul," replied the phantom, in a muffled voice.

"Who are you?" asked Roland.

"I am the ghost of him whom you violently sent out of the world."

The young officer laughed his harsh, nervous laugh, which sounded still more frightful in the shades. "Upon my word," he said, "if you cannot give me any better proof than that, I shall not take the trouble to investigate, I warn you."

"Remember the fountain of Vaucluse," said the spectre, in such feeble tones that the sentence seemed to fall from his mouth more like a sigh than like articulate words.

For a moment Roland felt the perspiration starting out upon his forehead; then by a strong effort he regained command over himself, and exclaimed threateningly: "For the last time, be you apparition or reality, if you do not wait for me, I will fire!"

The spectre continued on its way without seeming to hear. Roland stopped an instant to aim. The ghost was ten feet away from him; Roland was a sure shot, and he

had himself loaded the weapon a few moments before. When the spectre's figure was outlined, tall and white, against the gloomy background of the corridor, Roland fired.

The corridor was illuminated for an instant as if with a flash of lightning, and the spectre continued to advance without either hastening or retarding his steps. The darkness the next minute was all the more intense, by reason of the flash that had preceded it. The spectre had disappeared in the solemn gloom.

Roland darted forward in pursuit, passing his second pistol from his left hand to his right as he went. But short as had been his pause, the phantom had gained upon him. Roland saw it at the end of the corridor, clearly outlined against the night. He redoubled his speed, and came to the end of the corridor just as the spectre disappeared behind the door of the cistern.

Roland increased his pace still more. He reached the threshold of the door, and it seemed to him that the spectre was sinking into the bowels of the earth. Only the upper part of its body was visible.

"Were you the devil himself," said Roland, "I would follow you." And he discharged his second pistol, which filled with flame and smoke the cave in which the spectre was disappearing.

When the smoke had disappeared, Roland looked in vain for the apparition. It had disappeared. Roland leaped down into the cave, with an exclamation of rage. He sounded the walls with his pistols, and stamped upon the ground; but ground and stone gave forth the dull sound of solid objects. He tried to pierce the obscurity with his eyes, but it was impossible; the little light which came from the moon stopped at the first steps of the pit.

"Oh for a torch!" he cried.

There was no response; the only sound that he heard was the murmur of the brook as it flowed along near by. He saw that further search would be useless; so he emerged from the pit, and once more loaded his pistols. He retraced his steps through the dark corridor to the immense refectory, and resumed the seat at the end of the silent hall, which he had left upon the appearance of the spectre. Then he waited. But the hours of the night sounded successively, until at length they became morning hours, and the first rays of daylight tinged faintly the walls of the cloister.

"Well," he murmured, "it is over for to-night; perhaps I shall be more fortunate another time."

Twenty minutes later Roland entered the Château of Noires-Fontaines.

CHAPTER XVII.

A SEARCH.

Two persons awaited Roland's return, — one with anguish and the other with impatience. They were Amélie and Sir John. Neither of them had slept for a moment.

Amélie gave no sign of her anxiety except by the sound of her door, which shut as Roland ascended the staircase. Roland heard it, and he had not the heart to pass so near his sister without reassuring her.

"Don't be uneasy, Amélie," he called; "it is I." He could have no idea that his sister's fears were for another.

Amélie darted from her room, clad in her dressing-gown. Her pallor and the dark circles beneath her eyes betrayed the fact that she had not closed her eyes that night.

"Nothing has happened to you, Roland?" she asked, clasping her brother in her arms, and feeling of him solicitously.

"Nothing."

"Nor to any one else?"

"Nor to any one else."

"And you saw nothing?"

"I did not say that."

"Oh, heavens! what did you see?"

"I will tell you later; in the mean time you may rest assured no one is hurt."

"Ah, I am so relieved."

"And now," he said, "if I might give you a piece of advice, little sister, it would be to go quietly to bed, and to sleep if possible until breakfast time. I am going to do the same, and I shall not need to be rocked in a cradle in order to go to sleep, either. Good-night, or rather, good-morning."

Roland kissed his sister tenderly, and affecting to be carelessly whistling a hunting-song, he went upstairs to the next floor.

Sir John openly awaited him in the corridor. He went straight to the young man. "Well?" he asked.

"Well, I did not make a complete failure of it."

"You have seen a ghost?"

"I have seen something which very much resembled one, at all events."

"You will tell me about it?"

"Oh, yes. I understand that you could not sleep without hearing it; well, in a few words, this is what happened." And Roland gave an exact and circumstantial account of his adventure.

"Good!" said Sir John. "I hope you have left something for me."

"I am afraid," said Roland, "that I have left you the worst of it."

Then, as Sir John persisted, going over each detail, and asking questions about localities, Roland said: "I will tell you what we will do. To-day, after breakfast, we will pay a visit to the monastery by daylight. This will not prevent you from going there to-night, and you can study localities by daylight. But tell no one."

"Do I look like a braggart?" asked Sir John.

"No," said Roland, laughing, "indeed you do not. You are not a braggart, but I am a simpleton." And he went to his own room.

After breakfast, the two men descended the slope of the garden as if to visit the banks of the Reyssouse; then they went to the left, climbed the slope again at the end of forty feet, reached the high-road, crossed the wood, and found themselves at the foot of the monastery wall, at the very place where Roland had scaled it on the previous night.

"My lord," said Roland, "this is the way."

"Very well," said Sir John, "let us go that way then." And slowly, but with an admirable strength of wrist which showed him to be well grounded in gymnastics, the Englishman seized the coping of the wall, seated himself on the top, and slipped down again upon the other side.

Roland followed him with the swiftness of a man to whom the feat was an easy one. They were both upon the other side.

The deserted aspect of the place was yet more noticeable by day than by night. The grass had grown knee high in the paths; the walls were covered with vines so thick that the grapes could only die under the shadow of the leaves. In several places the wall had become dilapidated, and the ivy, that parasite rather than friend of ruins, was pushing its way upon all sides. As for the trees, — plums, peaches, and apricots, — they had grown with the liberty of the beeches and oaks of the forest, whose thickness and height they seemed to emulate, and the sap, entirely absorbed by the multipled and vigorous branches, only gave rare and inferior fruit. Two or three times Roland and Sir John knew by the movement in the long grass before them that snakes, those rampant guests of solitude, had established a home there, and were fleeing in astonishment at being disturbed.

Roland conducted his friend straight to the door leading

from the orchard to the cloister; but before entering it, he glanced at the dial of the clock, — that clock which went by night was stopped by day. From the cloister he passed to the refectory. There daylight revealed to him in their true aspect the objects which the darkness had clothed with the fantastic shapes of night.

Roland showed Sir John the overturned stool, the table battered with the blows of his pistol, and the door by which the ghost had entered. He took with Sir John the road he had followed in the track of the phantom; he recognized the obstacles which had impeded his progress, but which could easily be surmounted by any one who had a previous knowledge of the locality. When he came to the place where he had fired, he found the wadding, but failed to see any trace of the bullet. The corridor went diagonally with the room, and the ball must either have left its mark upon the wall, or struck the phantom. And yet if the phantom had been struck, and had opposed a solid body, how was it that it had remained upright? How had it at least escaped being wounded; and why, if it had been wounded, were there no traces of blood upon the ground? There was neither trace of blood nor sign of bullet.

Lord Tanlay was almost inclined to believe that his friend had met with a veritable ghost.

"Some one has been here since," said Roland, "and has picked up the ball."

"But if you shot at a man, why did the bullet not enter him?"

"That is simple enough: the man had a shirt of mail on under his shroud."

It was possible, but Sir John shook his head as if he doubted it. It was easier to believe in a supernatural solution.

They continued their investigation. They came to the

end of the corridor, and found themselves at the other extremity of the orchard. It was there that Roland had once more seen his ghost, of whom he had momentarily lost sight under the dark arch. He went straight to the cistern; he seemed to be still following the phantom, so little did he hesitate. There they found the obscurity of night made still more dense by the absence of all exterior reflection; they could scarcely see even by daylight.

Roland drew from beneath his mantle two torches a foot long, and struck a light with a flint and steel, and the torches flared up. Their object was to discover the passage by which the ghost had disappeared. They put their torches near the ground. The pit was paved with great blocks of freestone, which seemed to be perfectly joined to one another.

Roland searched for the second bullet as persistently as he had done for the first. There was a loose stone beneath his feet; and upon pushing it one side, he discovered a ring which was cemented into the flagstone. Without saying anything, Roland put his hand through the ring, braced himself upon his feet, and pulled. The stone turned upon a pivot with an ease that showed that it was constantly in use. In turning, it disclosed the entrance to a subterranean passage.

"Ah!" said Roland, "this is where my spectre went." And he descended into the yawning aperture.

Sir John went down after him. They followed the path which Morgan had taken on the night when he came to make his report, and at the end of the passage they found the gate leading to the burial vaults.

Roland shook the gate. It was not locked, and it yielded to his touch. They crossed the underground cemetery, and reached the other gate. Like the first, it was unfastened. Roland was ahead. They went up a few

steps, and found themselves in the choir of the chapel, where the scene between Morgan and the companions of Jehu had taken place; but the stalls were empty, the choir was solitary, and the altar, abandoned by worship, had no longer its flaring tapers and its holy cloth.

It was evident to Roland that the course of the false ghost, which Sir John persisted in believing to be a genuine one, had ended there. But whether the phantom were false or not, Sir John confessed that he must have stopped there.

The Englishman reflected for a moment, and then said: "Well, since it is my turn to watch to-night, and I have the right to choose my own position, I will watch here." And he indicated a sort of table made of the oaken foot which had formerly supported the eagle of the reading-desk.

"Yes," said Roland, with the same indifference which he would have shown if he had been in Sir John's place, "you will be very well placed; but as you may find the stone sealed and the two gates shut to-night, suppose we look for some door which will conduct you directly here."

At the end of five minutes they had found one. The door of an ancient sacristy opened upon the choir, and from this sacristy a ruined window gave a passage to the forest. The two men went out through the window, and found themselves in the thickest part of the wood, about twenty feet from the place where they had killed the boar.

"Here we are," said Roland; "but, my lord, as it would be impossible for you to find your way by night in a forest where we can barely make a passage by day, I shall come with you to-night as far as here."

"Yes," replied the other; "but as soon as I have gone in, you must go away. I have not forgotten what you

told me about the peculiarities of ghosts, and if they knew that you were only a few feet from me they might hesitate to appear; and since you have seen one, it is only fair that I should see one also."

"I will go away," said Roland; "you may make your mind easy. I have only one fear concerning you," he added laughing.

"What is that?"

"It is that as an Englishman and a heretic they may not like you very well."

"Oh," said Sir John, gravely, "what a pity it is that I have not time to change my faith before evening!"

The two friends had seen all that there was to see, and they therefore returned to the château. No one, not even Amélie, seemed to suspect that their walk had had more than an ordinary significance. The day passed without question, and without apparent uneasiness; indeed, when the two friends returned, it was already far advanced.

While they sat at table, to Edward's great joy they planned another hunt. This hunt was the burden of conversation during dinner, and for a part of the evening. At ten o'clock they all retired to their rooms, as was their custom. Roland, however, was in that of Sir John.

The contrast in the characters of the two friends showed itself plainly in their method of making preparations. Roland had made his joyously, as if for a party of pleasure; Sir John made his gravely, as if for a duel. The pistols were loaded with the greatest care, and put into his belt; and instead of a cloak, which might impede his movements, he wore over his coat an overcoat with a collar.

At half-past ten they went out, observing the same precautions which Roland had taken when he was by himself. At five minutes of eleven they were at the foot of the

ruined window, whose fallen stones served as steps. There, according to their agreement, they were to separate. Sir John reminded Roland of the fact.

"Yes," said the young man; "what I agree to I will hold to. Only, in my turn, let me give you a piece of advice."

"Well?"

"I did not find the bullets because some one had been to pick them up; they picked them up so that I should not see the marks upon them."

"And what marks do you think were on them?"

"Those of the links of a coat of mail. My ghost was an armed man."

"What a pity!" said Sir John. "I think the phantom would have been much nicer." Then, after a moment of silence, during which he uttered a sigh of profound regret at having to renounce the spectre, he said: "And what is your advice?"

"Aim at the face."

Sir John nodded, pressed the young officer's hand, climbed over the stones, entered the sacristy, and disappeared.

"Good-night!" cried Roland. And with that indifference to danger which a soldier generally feels for himself and his companions, Roland, as he had promised Sir John, took the road to the château.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE JUDGMENT.

THE next day Roland, who had not been able to fall asleep until nearly two o'clock in the morning, awoke at seven. When he opened his eyes he collected his scattered thoughts, recalling what had passed on the previous night between himself and Sir John, and was astonished that the Englishman had not waked him upon his return. He dressed quickly, and went to knock at the door of Sir John's room, even at the risk of waking him from his first sleep.

But Sir John made no response. Roland rapped more loudly. The same silence. This time a little uneasiness mingled with Roland's curiosity. The key was on the outside; the young officer opened the door, and cast a rapid glance around the room. Sir John was not there; he had not returned. The bed was untouched.

What had happened? There was not a moment to lose; and knowing Roland's rapidity of decision as we do, we may be sure he lost no time. He darted back to his room, finished dressing, put his hunting-knife in his belt, slung his gun over his shoulder, and went out. No one was awake except the chambermaid. Roland met her upon the stairs.

"You may tell Mme. de Montrevel," he said, "that I have gone for a turn in the forest of Seillon with my gun; she need not be uneasy if my lord and I do not return at

breakfast time." And Roland hurried rapidly away from the château.

Ten minutes later the young man stood by the window where, at eleven o'clock on the previous evening, he had left Lord Tanlay. He listened: inside, no sound was to be heard; outside, the ear of a hunter could recognize all those early morning murmurs which are made by game in the woods. Roland scaled the window with his usual agility, and hastened from the sacristy to the choir. A glance sufficed to assure him that not only the choir but the whole interior of the little chapel was empty. Had the ghosts caused the Englishman to take the opposite road to that which he himself had followed? It was possible.

Roland passed rapidly behind the altar, and reached the grating of the burial vaults. The grating was open. He went through it. The obscurity prevented him from seeing into the depths of the place; he called thrice for Sir John, but there was no reply. He reached the other grating. It was open, like the first. He entered the vaulted passage. But there, as it would be impossible for him in the midst of the darkness to use his gun, he put it into his shoulder belt, and took his hunting-knife in his hand instead.

In groping about, Roland went all the time farther in without meeting any one; and in proportion as he went forward the obscurity increased, showing that the slab of the cistern was shut. He reached thus the first step of the staircase, and went up until he touched the revolving slab with his head; then with an effort he turned the stone. Roland saw daylight once more. He darted into the cistern. The door which led into the orchard was open; Roland went through it, and crossed that part of the orchard which lay between the cistern and the cor-

ridor, at the other extremity of which he had fired upon his spectre. He crossed the corridor and found himself in the refectory. It was empty. As he had done in the burial vault, Roland called Sir John three times. The astonished echo, as if it had forgotten the sound of the human voice, gave a stammering reply.

It was not probable that Sir John had come here; it would be better to return to the point of departure. Roland passed again over the same route, and once more found himself in the choir of the chapel. It was there that Sir John must have passed the night, and it was there that some trace of him should be found.

Roland advanced into the choir. He had scarcely entered it when a cry escaped him. A large blood-stain was at his feet, disfiguring the flagstones of the choir. On the other side of the choir, a few steps from where the marble was reddened beneath his feet, was a second stain, not less large, not less red, not less recent, which seemed to match the other. One of these stains was at the right, the other at the left, of the pedestal which was formerly used to hold the eagle of the lectern, — the pedestal before which Sir John had said he would take his stand. Roland approached the pedestal; it was flowing with blood. It was evident that the drama had taken place there. It had been terrible, if one might judge from the traces it had left.

Roland, in his double character of hunter and soldier, was very clever at following a trail. He knew how to determine whether blood which was shed came from a dead man or a wounded one. The previous night had seen the fall of three dead or wounded men. Now, what were the probabilities? The two stains of blood in the choir, the one on the right and the one on the left, were probably the blood of Sir John's antagonists. The blood

on the pedestal was probably his own. Attacked upon both right and left, he had fired with both hands, and had killed or wounded a man with each shot; hence the two blood-stains which reddened the pavement. Attacked in his own turn, he had been struck near the pedestal, and upon the pedestal his blood had gushed forth.

At the end of five minutes' examination Roland was as sure of what we have just said as though he had been an eye-witness of the fight.

Now, what had been done with the three bodies? Roland disturbed himself very little about what had been done with two of them; but he very much desired to know what had become of that of Sir John. One track of blood began at the pedestal and went to the door: Sir John's body had been carried outside. Roland shook the massive door; it was only fastened by a bolt. At his first effort it opened; upon the other side of the threshold he found again the traces of blood. Then through the brushwood he traced the path which the men who were carrying the body had taken. The broken branches and trodden grass led Roland to the border of the forest, and to the road from Pont d'Ain to Bourg. There, living or dead, the body seemed to have been deposited upon the slope of the ditch; after which, nothing.

A man passed, coming from the direction of the Château of Noires-Fontaines. Roland went to him. "Have you seen anything upon the road? Have you met anything?" he asked.

"Yes, indeed," replied the man. "I saw two peasants carrying a body upon a litter."

"Ah!" cried Roland; "and the body was that of a living man?"

"The man was pale and motionless, and seemed to be dead."

"Did the blood run?"

"I saw some drops upon the road."

"In that case he is alive." Then drawing a louis from his pocket, he said: "Here is a louis; run to Dr. Milliet, at Bourg. Tell him to mount a horse, and ride like the devil to the Château of Noires-Fontaines. Say to him that there is a dying man there."

And while the peasant, stimulated by the reward he had received, hastened towards Bourg, Roland went in the direction of the château.

And now as our reader is in all probability as curious as Roland to know what happened to Sir John, we will inform him of the events of the night.

Sir John, as we have seen, at a few minutes before eleven o'clock entered what was usually called the pavilion of the monastery, but which was nothing more nor less than a chapel erected in the midst of the woods. From the sacristy he passed into the choir. The choir was empty, and appeared to be deserted; a moon, brilliant enough except when it was veiled by clouds, filtered its bluish rays through the broken stained glass of the lancet windows.

Sir John reached the middle of the choir, stopped before the pedestal, and remained there. The minutes slipped away; but this time they were marked, not by the monastery clock, but by the one in the church at Peronnaz, the nearest village to the chapel. Until midnight everything happened just as it had happened to Roland; that is to say, Sir John was disturbed only by vague murmurs and momentary noises.

Midnight sounded. It was the hour Sir John had impatiently awaited, for it was that upon which something would happen, if anything at all was to occur. At the

last stroke he thought he heard steps underground, and then he saw a light upon the side where the grating communicated with the tombs. His whole attention was riveted upon this point.

A monk came out of the passage, his hood pulled down over his eyes, and a torch in his hand; he wore the dress of the Chartreux. A second followed, and then another, until Sir John had counted twelve of them. They separated before the altar. There were twelve stalls in the choir, six at Sir John's right, and six at his left. The twelve monks silently placed themselves in the twelve stalls; each placed his torch in a hole made for that purpose, and waited. A thirteenth monk then appeared, and placed himself before the altar. None of them affected the fantastic behavior of phantoms or ghosts; all evidently belonged still to this earth; all were living men.

Sir John, standing with a pistol in each hand, leaning on his pedestal in the midst of the choir, watched with the greatest phlegm this manœuvre which seemed to surround him. Like him, the monks remained standing and mute. The monk at the altar broke the silence.

"Brothers," he demanded, "why are the avengers assembled?"

"To judge a profane one," replied the monks.

"And this profane one," continued the interrogator, — "what crime has he committed?"

"He has attempted to penetrate the secrets of the companions of Jehu."

"What penalty has he merited?"

"The penalty of death."

The monk at the altar left time for the pause which followed to penetrate to the very heart of him whom he accused. Then turning to the Englishman, who was still as calm as though he were assisting at a comedy, he said: —

"Sir John Tanlay, you are a stranger and an Englishman; this was a double reason for leaving the companions of Jehu to fight out their affairs with the government whose fall they have sworn to accomplish. You did not have this wisdom; you yielded to a vain curiosity; instead of going away, you have penetrated to the lions' den, and the lions will tear you to pieces." Then after a moment of silence, during which he seemed to await the Englishman's reply, he added, seeing that the latter remained mute: "Sir John Tanlay, your sentence is death; prepare to die."

"Ah, I see that I have fallen into the hands of bandits; in that case there is a chance of escape by ransom." Then, turning towards the monk at the altar, Sir John asked: "At what figure is it fixed, Captain?"

Murmured threats greeted these insolent words. The monk at the altar extended his hand.

"You are mistaken, Sir John; we are not a band of robbers," he said, in a tone which vied in calmness and *sangfroid* with that of the Englishman. "In proof of it, if you have about you a large sum of money or any precious jewels, you have only to give instructions, and money and jewels will be sent either to your family or to any one whom you may designate."

"And what guaranty shall I have that my last wishes will be fulfilled?"

"My word."

"The word of the chief of a band of assassins! I think not!"

"This time, as before, you are mistaken, Sir John. I am no more the chief of a company of assassins than I am the captain of bandits."

"What are you, then?"

"I am the chosen one of celestial vengeance. I am one

sent by Jehu, King of Israel, who was consecrated by the prophet Elisha to the work of exterminating the House of Ahab."

"If you are what you say, why do you veil your faces; why do you wear armor beneath your robes? Chosen ones strike with uncovered faces, and risk death in giving the blow! Pull up your hoods, show me your naked chests, and I will recognize you for what you pretend to be."

"Brothers, you have heard?" said the monk at the altar. And tearing aside his robe, he opened with a single movement his coat, his waistcoat, and even his shirt.

Each monk did the same, and stood with uncovered face and bared chest. They were all young men, of whom the eldest was not yet thirty-five. Their manners indicated a high degree of cultivation; and, strange to say, not one of them was armed. They were indeed judges, and nothing else.

"Be content, Sir John Tanlay," said the monk at the altar; "you are about to die, but in dying you will be able, according to your expressed desire, to recognize and to kill. Sir John, you have five minutes in which to recommend your soul to God."

Sir John, instead of profiting by this permission and thinking of his spiritual safety, tranquilly raised the hammers of his pistols to see if the priming was in good condition, worked the cocks up and down to ascertain if the springs were perfect, and passed the ramrod into the barrels to satisfy himself that the balls were in position. Then, without waiting the five minutes which had been granted him, he said, —

"Gentlemen, I am ready; are you?"

The young men looked at one another; then, at a sign from their chief, they approached Sir John, surrounding

him on all sides. The monk at the altar remained motionless in his place, watchful of what was going on.

Sir John had only two pistols, and consequently could kill only two men. He chose his victims, and fired. Two companions of Jehu rolled upon the pavement, reddening it with their blood. The others, as if nothing had happened, advanced at the same pace, extending their hands towards Sir John. He had grasped the barrels of his two pistols, and used them like two hammers. He was vigorous, and the fight was a long one. For about ten minutes a confused group swayed to and fro in the middle of the choir; finally this ceased, and the companions of Jehu separated right and left, and regained their stalls, leaving Sir John bound with the cords of their girdles and lying upon the pedestal in the midst of the choir.

"Have you commended your soul to God?" asked the monk at the altar.

"Yes, assassin," replied Sir John, "you may strike."

The monk took a poniard from the altar, and raising his arm high above Sir John, and holding the poniard suspended over his breast, he said: "Sir John Tanlay, you are brave and honorable. Take an oath that not a word of what you have just seen will ever pass your lips, swear that under no circumstances will you ever recognize any of us, and we will give you your life."

"If I ever go out from here," replied Sir John, "it will be to denounce you; as soon as I have my liberty, I shall use it to pursue you."

"Swear!" repeated the monk.

"No!" said Sir John.

"Swear!" said the monk, for the third time.

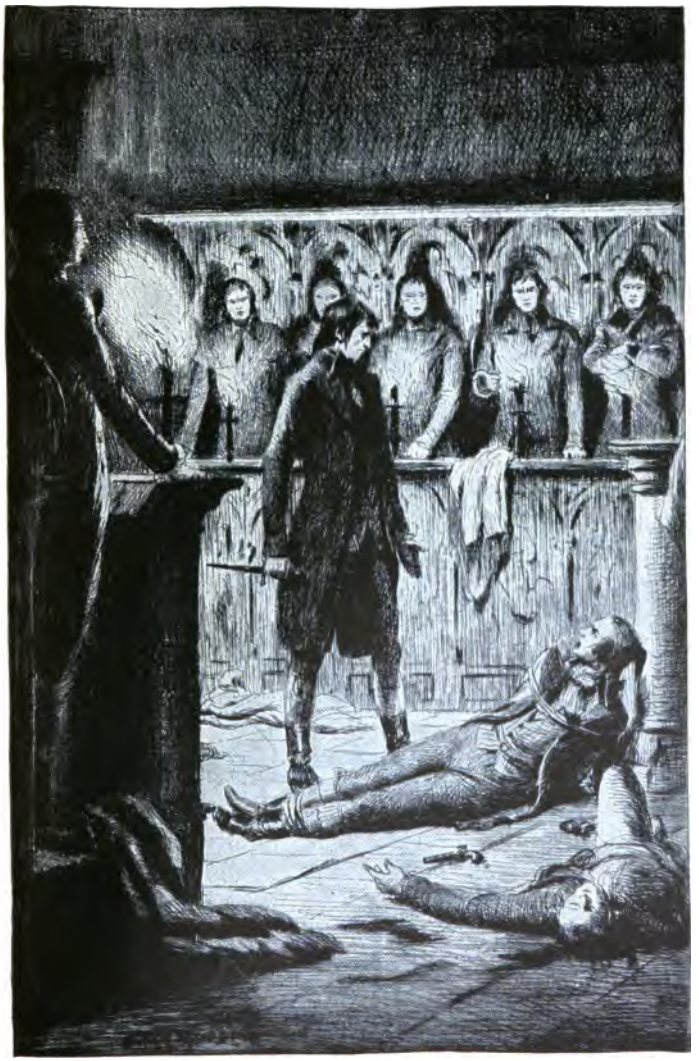
"Never!" replied Sir John.

"Well, die then, since you will have it so!" said the

THE JUDGMENT.

Drawn by E. Van Muyden.

THE COMPANIONS OF JEHU, I. 190.



monk, and he buried the poniard up to the hilt in the breast of his victim, who, either by force of will or because he was instantly killed, uttered not even a sigh.

Then in a full, sonorous voice, — the voice of a man who feels that he has accomplished his duty, — the monk said, "Justice is done!" After which, leaving the poniard in the wound, and going back to the altar, he added: "Brothers, as you are aware, you are invited to Paris, to the Rue du Bac, No. 35, to the ball of the victims, which will take place upon the 21st of next January, in memory of the death of King Louis XVI." Then he led the way into the subterranean passage, followed by the ten remaining monks, each carrying his torch. Two torches remained, to light the three corpses.

A moment afterwards two lay-brothers entered; they began by taking the two bodies lying upon the flagging and carrying them into the vault. Then they returned, raised the body of Sir John, placed it upon a litter, and carried it out of the chapel, passing through the great entrance-door, which they closed behind them. The two monks who walked before the litter carried the two remaining torches.

And now, if our readers ask the reason for the difference in the treatment of Roland and Sir John, for the clemency towards one and the severity towards the other, we reply that Morgan had given a safeguard to Amélie's brother; and protected thus, it was impossible that Roland should have died by the hand of a companion of Jehu.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE LITTLE HOUSE IN THE RUE DE LA VICTOIRE.

While the body of Sir John Tanlay is being carried to the Château of Noires-Fontaines; while Roland is hastening in the direction which has been pointed out to him; while the peasant sent by him is hurrying to Bourg to inform Dr. Milliet of the catastrophe which makes his presence necessary at Mme. de Montrevel's, — let us leap over the space which separates Bourg from Paris, and the time which elapses between the 16th of October and the 7th of November (or, in other words, between the 24th Vendémiaire and the 16th Brumaire), and enter, about four o'clock in the afternoon, that little house in the Rue de la Victoire, made historical by the famous conspiracy of the 18th Brumaire, which was completed there. It is the same which still preserves the consular sheaves on each leaf of its double oaken door, after so many successive changes of government, and which on the right hand side of the street, No. 60, still offers itself to the curious gaze of the passer-by.

Let us follow the long, narrow alley of lindens which leads from the gate to the house door; let us enter the ante-chamber, take the passage to the right, and ascend the twenty steps which lead to a room hung with green paper and furnished with curtains, chairs, sofas, and hangings of the same color. Its walls are covered with maps and plans of cities; a double bookcase of maple-wood extends each side of the chimney-piece, which it encloses;

the chairs, sofas, tables, and desks are overflowing with books; there is scarcely room on the chairs to sit down, or on the tables and desks to write.

In the midst of a litter of accounts, letters, pamphlets, and books in which he has made himself a place, a man is sitting, endeavoring, while he impatiently tugs at his hair from time to time, to decipher a page of writing beside which the hieroglyphics of the obelisk of Louqsor would be transparently intelligible. Just as the secretary's impatience was merging into despair the door opened, and a young officer in the costume of an *aide-de-camp* entered. The secretary raised his head, and a flash of joy lighted up his face.

"Oh, my dear Roland," he said, "here you are at last! I am delighted to see you, for three reasons, — first, because I have been longing for you; second, because the general has been impatiently expecting you, and has repeatedly asked for you; and third, because you are going to help me read this word, over which I have been groaning for ten minutes. But, first and foremost, come and shake hands."

The two men greeted each other warmly.

"And now," said the *aide-de-camp*, "what is this troublesome word, Bourrienne?"

"Such frightful writing! every page that I read gives me another gray hair, and I am on my third page to-day. Here, read it if you can."

Roland took the page from the secretary's hand, fixed his eyes upon the place indicated, and read, fluently enough, —

"'Paragraph XI. The Nile, from Assouan to a point three leagues north of Cairo, flows in a single stream.'

"Well," he said, pausing, "that goes of itself. What

were you talking about? On the contrary, the general has taken more pains than usual."

"Go on, go on!" said Bourrienne.

The young man continued: —

"'From this point, which is called [the devil!] — which is called—'"

"Yes, which is called — what?"

"What will you give me, Bourrienne," exclaimed Roland, "if I get it?"

"I will give you the first colonel's commission that I find signed in blank."

"No, indeed! I don't want to leave the general. I would rather have one good father than five hundred bad children. I will give you your three words for nothing."

"What! are there three words there?"

"Which do not look like more than one, I confess. Listen and bow down.

"'From this point, which is called Ventre della Vacca —'"

"Oh! Ventre de la Vache! Upon my word! the writing is illegible, even in French; and when he takes it into his head to write in Italian, to say nothing of the *patois* of Ajaccio! I thought I only ran the risk of becoming crazy, but I shall get stupid also. Yes, you've hit it."

And he repeated the entire phrase: —

"'The Nile, from Assouan to a point three leagues north of Cairo, flows in a single stream. From this point, which is called Ventre de la Vache, it forms the branches of Rosetta and Damietta.'

"Thanks, Roland." And he began writing the last part of the paragraph, the first of which was already transcribed.

"Is our general still riding his hobby?" asked Roland. "Is he going to colonize Egypt?"

"Oh, yes; and by way of diversion he will take a hand at governing France. We will colonize — at a distance."

"And now, Bourrienne, tell me something of what is going on, so that I shall not appear to have come from the ends of the earth."

"In the first place, did you return of your own accord, or were you recalled?"

"Recalled, emphatically."

"By whom?"

"By the general himself."

"Special dispatch?"

"From his own hand; see!"

The young man drew from his pocket a couple of lines, unsigned, in the same handwriting as that on the pages before Bourrienne. The two lines read: —

"Leave, and be at Paris on the 18th Brumaire. I need you."

"Yes," said Bourrienne, "I suppose it is for the 18th."

"What is to happen on the 18th?"

"Oh, now you ask me something I cannot answer, Roland. The general, as you are aware, is not communicative. I do not know yet what will happen on the 18th Brumaire, but I rather think there will be something."

"Oh, then you are not sure?"

"I think that he wants to be director instead of Sieyès; or perhaps even president in Gohier's place."

"Good! but how about the constitution of the year III?"

"What do you mean?"

"That a man must be forty years old to be director, and that the general lacks exactly ten years of that."

"So much the worse for the Constitution; it will be disregarded."

Roland shook his head.

"Well, what is it?" asked Bourrienne.

"I do not believe that our general will have himself made simply a director, with four colleagues. Think of it! five kings of France!"

"At all events, he has thus far given tokens of nothing else; but you know that with our general, when we want to know, we have to guess."

"Oh, I am too lazy to take the trouble, Bourrienne. I am a true janissary; what he does will be well done. Why the devil should I take the trouble to have an opinion, and defend it? Existence is wearisome enough in itself." And the young man ended the aphorism with a long yawn; then he added carelessly, "Do you think there will be any fighting, Bourrienne?"

"Probably."

"Well, then, there will be a chance to get killed; that's all I want. Where is the general?"

"He is with Mme. Bonaparte; he went down there a quarter of an hour ago. Have you sent word to him that you have come?"

"No; I was not sorry to see you first. But I hear his voice now. Here he is!"

Just then the door opened suddenly, and the same historical person whom we have seen playing a silent rôle at Avignon appeared upon the threshold, in the picturesque costume of general-in-chief of the Egyptian army. His head, however, was bare, for he was in his own house. Roland thought his eyes looked more sunken and his complexion more sallow than ever. However, when he caught sight of Roland, his thoughtful eyes shone with joy.

"Ah, it is you, Roland!" he said. "You are faithful as steel. I call, and you come. You are welcome." And he extended his hand to the young man. Then with an imperceptible smile, he added: "What are you doing with Bourrienne?"

"I was waiting for you, General."

"And while you were waiting, you were gossiping like a couple of old women."

"I confess it; I was showing him my order to be here on the 16th Brumaire."

"Did I write the 16th or the 17th?"

"Oh, the 16th, General. The 17th would have been too late."

"Why would the 17th have been too late?"

"Well, in case there are, as Bourrienne says, great plans afoot for the 18th —"

"There you go!" murmured Bourrienne; "give me away, won't you?"

"Ah, did he tell you that I had great plans for the 18th?" He crossed over to Bourrienne, and taking him by the ear, said: "Gossip!" Then to Roland: "Well, yes, my friend, there are great plans for the 18th; my wife and I are going to dine with President Gohier, who has been very kind to Josephine in my absence. You will dine there with us, Roland."

Roland looked at Bonaparte. "Was that the reason you recalled me, General?" he asked laughing.

"Yes, for that, and perhaps for something else also. Write, Bourrienne."

Bourrienne took up his pen.

"Are you ready?"

"Yes, General."

My dear President, — This is to inform you that my wife, myself, and one of my *aides-de-camp* will dine with you

on the afternoon of the 18th. We prefer to make it an informal affair.

"And then?" said Bourrienne.

"What do you mean?"

"Shall I put, 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity'?"

"Or death!" added Roland.

"No," said Bonaparte. "Give me the pen." He took the pen from Bourrienne, and wrote, —

Yours,

BONAPARTE.

Then, pushing back the paper, he said: "Here, address it, Bourrienne, and send it by special messenger."

Bourrienne addressed and sealed it, and then rang. An officer entered.

"Have this taken by special messenger," said Bourrienne.

"There will be an answer," added Bonaparte.

The officer shut the door.

"Bourrienne," said the general, motioning to Roland, "look at your friend."

"Well, General, I see him."

"Do you know what he did at Avignon?"

"I hope he did n't make a Pope."

"No; he threw a plate at a man's head."

"That was rather a hasty thing to do."

"That was not all."

"I suppose not."

"He fought a duel with this man."

"And killed him, I suppose," said Bourrienne.

"Exactly; and do you know the reason for all this?"

"No."

The general shrugged his shoulders. "Because the man called me a thief." Then, looking at Roland with an indescribable expression of affectionate raillery, he said:

"Idiot!" Then suddenly he added: "By the way, what of the Englishman?"

"Exactly; I was just going to speak to you of him."

"Is he still in France?"

"Yes, and I thought at one time that he would stay here until the trumpet sounded the reveillé in the valley of Jehoshaphat, on the judgment day."

"Did you come near killing him, too?"

"Oh, no! we are the best friends possible; and, General, he is such an excellent man, and so original at the same time, that I am going to ask for a little bit of your friendship for him."

"The devil! for an Englishman?" Bonaparte shook his head. "I don't like the English."

"Yes, as a nation; but as individuals —"

"Well, what happened to your friend?"

"He was judged, condemned, and executed."

"What the devil are you telling me?"

"God's truth, General."

"What! that he was judged, condemned, and guillotined?"

"Oh, not exactly. Judged and condemned, yes; but not guillotined. If that had happened to him, he would be worse off than he is now."

"Well, then, what do you mean? By what tribunal was he judged and condemned?"

"By the tribunal of the companions of Jehu."

"What's that?"

"Come! have you already forgotten Morgan, the masked man who brought back the wine merchant's two hundred louis?"

"No," said Bonaparte, "I have not forgotten it. Bourrienne, I told you about the rascal's audacity, did n't I?"

"Yes, General," replied Bourrienne, "and I told you

that if I had been in your place, I should have wanted to find out who he was."

"Oh, the general would have known that before now if he had let me have my way. I was just going to spring at his throat and tear away his mask, when the general held me back."

"Well, how about your Englishman?" asked the general. "Did this Morgan assassinate him?"

"No, he did not; but his companions did."

"But you spoke just now of a tribunal and a judgment."

"General, that is just like you," said Roland, with a return to the familiarity of the military school; "you want to know, but you will not give me a chance to speak."

"Join the Five Hundred, and you can talk as much as you like."

"Yes! in the Five Hundred I should have four hundred and ninety-nine colleagues who would be just as anxious to speak as I, and who would interrupt me. I would rather be interrupted by you than by a lawyer."

"Will you speak?"

"I ask nothing better. There is, near Bourg, a monastery —"

"The monastery of Seillon; I know it."

"What! you know the monastery of Seillon?" asked Roland.

"Does not the general know everything?" interposed Bourrienne.

"Let us see; are there any monks in your monastery?"

"No; there is nothing there but ghosts."

"Perhaps you are going to tell me a ghost story."

"One of the finest."

"The devil! Bourrienne knows how I adore them. Go on!"

"Well, some one came to my mother's house, who told us that there were ghosts at the monastery. You can imagine that Sir John and I, or rather I and Sir John, seized upon the chance. We each of us passed a night there."

"Where?"

"At the monastery."

Bonaparte made with his thumb an almost imperceptible sign of the cross, — a Corsican habit which he had never outgrown. "Ah," he said, "and did you see the ghosts?"

"I saw one."

"And what did you do to it?"

"I fired at it."

"And then?"

"Then it continued on its way."

"And you gave it up?"

"Ah, how well you know me! I followed it, and fired on it again; but as it knew its way among the ruins better than I did, it escaped me."

"The devil!"

"The next day it was Sir John's turn."

"And did he see your ghost?"

"He saw more than that; he saw twelve monks, who came into the church, tried him for having attempted to penetrate their secrets, condemned him to death, and, upon my honor, poniarded him."

"And he did not defend himself?"

"Like a lion. He killed two of them."

"And he died?"

"He came very near it; but I hope now that he will escape. He was found by the side of the road, and brought to my mother's house with a poniard stuck in his breast, like a pole in a vineyard."

"It is like a scene from St. Vehme."

"And on the blade of the poniard, as if to leave no doubt as to who gave the blow, was deeply engraved, 'Companions of Jehu.'"

"Oh, it is not possible that such things can take place in France, in the last year of the eighteenth century! It might have happened in Germany, in the Middle Ages, in the times of the Henrys."

"Not possible, General? Well, here is the poniard; what do you think of the form of it? Prepossessing, is it not?" And the young man drew from his coat a poniard made entirely of steel, both blade and hilt.

The handle was in the form of a cross, and upon the blade was engraved, as he had said, "Companions of Jehu."

Bonaparte examined the weapon carefully. "And you say that they planted this plaything in your Englishman's chest?"

"Up to the hilt."

"And he is not dead?"

"Not yet, at all events."

"Do you hear that, Bourrienne?"

"With the greatest interest."

"You must remind me of this, Bourrienne."

"When, General?"

"When — when I am master. Come and speak to Josephine; come, Bourrienne, you will dine with us; be careful what you say to each other, for Moreau will be there. I will keep the poniard as a curiosity."

Bonaparte went out first, followed by Roland and Bourrienne. On the stairs he met the messenger who had been sent to Gohier. "Well," he asked.

"Here is the president's reply."

"Give it to me."

He broke the seal and read: —

16th BRUMAIRE, year VII.

President Gohier is delighted at the happiness which General Bonaparte promises him. He will expect him on the afternoon of the 18th Brumaire, at dinner, with his charming wife and the *aide-de-camp* referred to.

Dinner will be served at five o'clock.

If this hour is not convenient for the general, he is entreated to name any other that he may prefer.

President GOHIER.

Bonaparte put the letter into his pocket, with an ambiguous smile. Then, turning towards Roland, he asked: "Do you know President Gohier?"

"No, General."

"Well, you will see him; he is a very worthy man." And the words were pronounced with an accent not less ambiguous than the smile.

CHAPTER XX.

GENERAL BONAPARTE'S GUESTS.

JOSEPHINE, in spite of her thirty-four years, or perhaps because of them, — that delightful age in woman from which she can view at once her past youth and her future old age, — Josephine, still beautiful, and more graceful than ever, was the charming woman whom we all know. An imprudent remark on the part of Junot, when her husband had first returned, had created a little coldness between them; but three days had sufficed to restore to the enchantress all her power over the conqueror of Rivoli and the Pyramids.

Josephine was doing the honors of the salon when Roland entered. True creole that she was, she was always incapable of concealing her feelings; she uttered a cry of joy, and held out her hand to him as soon as she saw him. She knew that Roland was devoted to her husband; she knew his reckless bravery, and that if he had had twenty lives, he would have given them all for General Bonaparte. Roland eagerly took the hand which she held out to him, and kissed it respectfully. Josephine had known Roland's mother at Martinique, and when she saw Roland she never failed to inquire for his maternal grandfather, M. de la Clemencière, in whose magnificent garden as a child she had picked those luscious fruits unknown to our colder regions. She began at once, and inquired affectionately for the health of Mme. de Montrevel, her daughter, and little Edward. After which she said: —

"My dear Roland, I must devote myself to my guests; but I wish you would try to remain to-night after the others have gone, or else come and see me alone to-morrow; I want to speak to you of him," — she glanced at Bonaparte, — "and I have a million things to tell you." Then, pressing the young man's hand, she said with a sigh: "Whatever happens, you will not desert him, will you?"

"Whatever happens? What do you mean?" asked Roland, in astonishment.

"I know what I mean," replied Josephine, "and I am sure that after you have talked ten minutes with Bonaparte, you will understand also. In the mean time, watch, listen, and be silent."

Roland bowed, and retired to one side, resolved, according to the advice given him by Josephine, to confine himself to the rôle of an observer.

There was plenty to observe. Three groups occupied the salon. One was gathered around Mme. Bonaparte, the only lady in the room, and was variable rather than fixed. Talma was the centre of a second one, which was composed of Arnault, Parseval-Grandmaison, Monge, Berthollet, and two or three members of the Institute. A third was joined by Bonaparte, and among its members could be remarked Talleyrand, Barras, Lucien, Admiral Bruix,[1] Roederer, Regnaud de Saint-Jean-d'Angely, Fouché, Réal, and two or three generals, among whom was Lefebvre.

In the first group they were talking of fashion, music, and the drama; in the second, of literature, science, and dramatic art; in the third, of everything except that of which they wished to speak. This reserve probably did

[1] Not to be mistaken for Rear-Admiral de Brueys, who was killed at Aboukir, August 1, 1798. Admiral Bruix, negotiator of the 18th Brumaire with Talleyrand, did not die until 1805.

not correspond with the thought in Bonaparte's mind; for after a few moments of insignificant conversation, he took the old bishop of Autun by the arm, and led him into the embrasure of a window.

"Well?" he asked.

Talleyrand looked at Bonaparte in his inimitable way. "Well, what did I tell you of Sieyès, General?" he said.

"You told me, 'Look for support among the people who treat as Jacobins the friends of the Republic, and you will be convinced that Sieyès is at the head of those people.'"

"I was not wrong."

"Then he gives himself up?"

"Better still, he has returned—"

"The man who wanted to have me shot for having landed at Fréjus without stopping for quarantine!"

"Oh, no! it was not for that."

"For what then?"

"For having neither looked at nor spoken to him at a dinner at Gohier's."

"I will confess to you that I did it purposely. I cannot bear this monk who has renounced his order."

Bonaparte perceived, when it was too late, that his remark was like the archangel's sword, two-edged; for if Sieyès had renounced his monk's habit, Talleyrand had likewise renounced his mitre. He threw a rapid glance at his companion's face. The ex-bishop of Autun smiled his sweetest smile.

"Then I can depend upon him?" said the general.

"I will answer for him."

"And Cambacérès and Lebrun, have you seen them?"

"I had only Sieyès to attend to, as being the most refractory; Bruix saw the other two."

The admiral, from the midst of the group where he was standing, did not take his eyes off the general and the statesman; he suspected that their conversation was an important one. Bonaparte made a sign to him to join them.

A less clever man would have obeyed instantly. Bruix took care not to do this. He walked carelessly about the room two or three times, and then, as if he had suddenly perceived Talleyrand and Bonaparte, he joined them.

"Bruix is a remarkable man," said Bonaparte, who judged men from little things as well as from great ones.

"And a prudent one also, General," added Talleyrand.

"We shall need a corkscrew to draw the words from his mouth."

"Oh, no! now that he has joined us, he will go straight to the point."

In fact, Bruix had scarcely reached them before he said clearly and concisely: "I have seen them, and they hesitate."

"They hesitate! Cambacérès and Lebrun hesitate! I can understand Lebrun, — a man of letters, a moderate, a puritan; but Cambacérès —"

"It is so."

"Did you not tell them that I intended to make a consul of each of them?"

"I did not get as far as that," replied Bruix, laughing.

"And why not?" demanded Bonaparte.

"Because this is the first time you have said anything of the kind to me, General."

"That's a fact," said Bonaparte, biting his lips.

"Shall I repair the omission?" asked Bruix.

"No," said Bonaparte, quickly; "they will think that I need them. I don't want any evasions. Let them decide to-day, without any inducements other than those you have given them; to-morrow it will be too late. I

not correspond with the ... them; and I have Sieyès and for after a few moments ... others in astonishment. took the old bishop of ... me as the Little Corporal, and into the embrasure of a w... come back from Italy because, as

"Well?" he asked. ... my fortune there, and it is useless

Talleyrand looked at h... Barras—"

"Well, what did I tell ... Then correcting himself, he added: said.

"You told me, 'Look ... you. Do you know what Barras who treat as Jacobins the ... dinner before me?—that it was will be convinced that ... with the constitution of the year people.'"

"I was not wrong." ... the necessity for a dictator; that

"Then he gives himself ... to abandon the reins of govern-

"Better still, he has re... opinions were worn out, and that

"The man who wants ... men. Now, guess to whom he landed at Fréjus without ... his power.—to General Hédou-

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[illegible] Bruix asked in a low tone, —

[illegible] you think, my dear Maurice, of these sent-
[illegible] the man who distinguished him at the
[illegible] when he was only a simple officer who
[illegible] support of the Convention on the thirteenth
[illegible] and who finally caused him at the age of
[illegible] be named general-in-chief of the army in

[illegible] my dear admiral," replied Talleyrand, with
[illegible] mocking smile, "that there are some
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[illegible] the door opened, and General Moreau was
[illegible] this announcement, which was an unex-
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am strong enough without them; and I have Sieyès and Barras."

"Barras!" repeated the others, in astonishment.

"Yes, Barras, who treats me as the Little Corporal, and does not send for me to come back from Italy because, as he says, I have made my fortune there, and it is useless for me to return. Well, Barras —"

"Barras?"

"Oh, nothing —" Then correcting himself, he added: "Well, I may as well tell you. Do you know what Barras confessed yesterday at dinner before me? — that it was impossible to get along with the constitution of the year III; that he recognized the necessity for a dictator; that he had decided to retire, to abandon the reins of government, — adding that his opinions were worn out, and that the Republic needed new men. Now, guess to whom he was inclined to transfer his power, — to General Hédouville, a worthy man; but I can look him out of countenance in no time. It is true that my glance is like a thunderbolt. The result is that Barras was at my bedside at eight o'clock this morning, excusing himself as best he could for his stupidity of yesterday; recognizing that I alone could save the Republic; declaring that he had come to put himself under my orders, to do what I wanted done, to take any part I should give him; and begging me, if I was planning anything, to promise to depend on him. Yes, he said he would await me under the elm!"

"But, General," said Talleyrand, who could not resist the temptation to exercise his wit, "only until the time when the elm is no longer a tree of liberty."

Bonaparte looked at the ex-bishop. "Yes, I know that Barras is your friend, and that of Fouché and Real; but he is not mine, and I will prove him. You will go back to Cambacérès and Lebrun, Bruix, and make them give a

decisive answer." Then looking at his watch, and frowning, he added: "It seems to me Moreau is making us wait for him." And he went towards the group of which Talma was the centre.

The two statesmen watched him as he moved away. Then Admiral Bruix asked in a low tone, —

"What do you think, my dear Maurice, of these sentiments towards the man who distinguished him at the siege of Toulon when he was only a simple officer; who gave him the support of the Convention on the thirteenth Vendémiaire; and who finally caused him at the age of twenty-six to be named general-in-chief of the army in Italy?"

"I think, my dear admiral," replied Talleyrand, with his pale and mocking smile, "that there are some services so great that they can only be repaid by ingratitude."

Just then the door opened, and General Moreau was announced. At this announcement, which was an unexpected one for most of those present, all looks were turned towards the door. Moreau entered.

At that time, three men held the eyes of France, and Moreau was one of them. The two others were Bonaparte and Pichegru. Each one of them had become as it were a symbol.

Pichegru, since the 18th Fructidor, was the symbol of monarchy; Moreau, since they had surnamed him Fabius, was the symbol of the Republic; Bonaparte, the symbol of war, surpassed them all, by reason of his adventurous genius.

Moreau was then in the full strength of his age: we should have said of his genius, but for the fact that one of the attributes of genius is decision, and nothing was more undecided than the famous *cunctateur*. He was then

thirty-six years of age, with a tall figure and a face at once gentle, calm, and firm; he must have resembled Xenophon.

Bonaparte had never seen Moreau; neither had Moreau ever seen Bonaparte. While one was fighting on the Adige and the Mincio, the other was engaged on the Danube and the Rhine.

Bonaparte went towards Moreau as soon as he saw him. "You are welcome, General," he said.

Moreau smiled with extreme courtesy. "General," he replied, while they all gathered around to see how this Cæsar met his Pompey, "you have returned from Egypt victorious, while I have just come from Italy after a great defeat."

"Which was not your own, and for which you are not responsible, General. It was Joubert's fault. If he had returned to the army in Italy as soon as he was appointed commander-in-chief, it is more than probable that the Russians and Austrians, with the comparatively few troops that they then had, could not have resisted him; but the honeymoon kept him in Paris! This fatal month, for which poor Joubert paid with his life, gave them time to unite their forces; the surrender of Mantua gave them fifteen thousand men, who arrived on the eve of the battle. It was impossible for our brave army not to be overwhelmed by such odds."

"Alas! yes," said Moreau; "the smaller number is always beaten by the greater."

"That is a great truth, General," exclaimed Bonaparte, — "an incontrovertible one."

"And yet," said Arnault, joining the conversation, "you have beaten large armies with small ones."

"If you were Marius, instead of the author of Marius, you would not say that, Monsieur the poet. Although I

have conquered large armies with small ones, — listen carefully, you young men who obey now, but who expect to command some time, — it is always the smaller number that is beaten by the greater."

"I do not understand," said Arnault and Lefebvre at the same time. But Moreau made a sign of the head which indicated that he comprehended the general's meaning.

Bonaparte continued: "Follow my theory, and you have the art of war. When I was in the presence of a large army with a small force, I would group mine rapidly, and fall like a thunderbolt upon one of the wings, cutting it off. I would take advantage of the disorder into which this manœuvre never failed to throw the enemy, to attack in another place, still with my whole force. I could conquer thus in detail; and the consequent victory was always, as you see, the triumph of the greater number over the smaller."

While the clever general was giving this definition of his genius, the door opened, and dinner was announced.

"Come, General," said Bonaparte, leading Moreau to Josephine, "give your arm to my wife, and let us go to dinner." And at this invitation they all passed into the dining-room.

After dinner, under pretext of showing Moreau a magnificent sabre which he had brought from Egypt, Bonaparte took him into his study. The two rivals remained for more than an hour closeted there. What passed between them; what agreement was signed; what promises were made? No one ever knew.

When Bonaparte returned alone to the salon, Lucien asked, —

"Well, what of Moreau?"

Bonaparte replied: "As I thought, he prefers military

to political power; I have promised him the command of an army."

As he pronounced these last words, Bonaparte smiled. "And in the mean time —" he continued.

"In the mean time?" echoed Lucien.

"He will have that of Luxembourg. I am not sorry to make him the jailer of the Directors before making him the conqueror of the Austrians."

The next day the "Moniteur" had this paragraph:

"*Paris, 17th Brumaire.* — Bonaparte has presented to Moreau a Damascus sword ornamented with precious stones, which he brought from Egypt, the value of which is estimated at twelve thousand francs."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BALANCE SHEET OF THE DIRECTORY.

As we have said, Moreau, armed no doubt with instructions, left the little house in the Rue de la Victoire, while Bonaparte returned alone to the salon. Upon such an evening nothing escaped observation; and therefore Moreau's absence and Bonaparte's solitary return were noticed, as well as the visible good-humor which shone upon the face of the latter. He was observed more eagerly by Josephine and Roland than by any one else; Moreau upon Bonaparte's side added twenty per cent to the chances of success, while Moreau against him took away at least fifty per cent.

Josephine's eyes were so full of entreaty that when Bonaparte left Lucien he pushed him gently towards his wife. Lucien understood, and approached Josephine.

"All is well," he said.

"Moreau?"

"He is with us."

"I thought he was a republican."

"It has been proved to him that we are acting for the good of the Republic."

"I should have thought him ambitious," said Roland.

Lucien started, and looked at the young man. "You are right," he said.

"Well, then," said Josephine, "if he is ambitious, he will not let Bonaparte have power."

"Why not?"

"Because he will want it for himself."

"Yes; but he expects it to be brought to him ready made, while he could not create it, and would not dare to take it."

In the mean time Bonaparte had joined the group which had again formed around Talma. "What are you talking about, Talma?" he asked; "they seem to be listening to you very attentively."

"Yes, but my reign is ended," returned the artist.

"Why so?"

"Like citizen Barras, I abdicate."

"Has citizen Barras abdicated?"

"So they say."

"And do they know who will be named in his place?"

"They suspect."

"Is it one of your friends, Talma?"

"He has done me the honor," said Talma, bowing, "to call me one of his friends."

"In that case, Talma, I ask your protection."

"It is granted," said Talma, laughing. "Now, what do you want to be protected against?"

"Against being sent to Italy, from which place citizen Barras did not want me to return."

"Well," said Talma, "you know the song, General,—

"'We will go no more to the woods,
The laurels are cut!'"

"Oh, Roscius, Roscius!" said Bonaparte, smiling, "have you turned flatterer in my absence?"

"Roscius was Cæsar's friend, General, and on his return from Gaul he must have said some such thing to him."

Bonaparte laid his hand on Talma's shoulder. "Would

he have said the same to him after the passage of the Rubicon?"

Talma looked Bonaparte in the face. "No," he replied. "He would have said, with the oracle, 'Cæsar, beware of the Ides of March!'"

Bonaparte fumbled in his pocket as if seeking something, and his fingers closed convulsively around the poniard of the companions of Jehu. Had he a presentiment of the conspiracies of Aréna, Saint-Régent, and Cadoudal? Just then the door opened, and General Bernadotte was announced.

"Bernadotte!" murmured Bonaparte, involuntarily, "what can he want?"

In fact, since Bonaparte's return, Bernadotte had kept persistently aloof, refusing all overtures made to him by Bonaparte or his friends. The reason for this was that for a long time Bernadotte had recognized the man of politics beneath the soldier's coat, the dictator beneath the commander-in-chief; and Bernadotte, king that he was afterwards, was at this time a very different kind of a republican from Moreau. But Bernadotte believed that he had a grudge against Bonaparte. His military career had been not less brilliant than that of the young general; his fortune would equal his, end to the end; but, more fortunate than he, he was to die upon a throne. It is true that Bernadotte would not have conquered this throne; he would have been called to it.

The son of a lawyer of Pau, Bernadotte, born in 1764, five years before Bonaparte, had become a common soldier at the age of seventeen. In 1789 he was still only sergeant-major; but it was an epoch of rapid promotions. In 1794 he was proclaimed brigadier-general by Kléber, on the battle-field where he had just won a victory; as a general of division, he had taken a brilliant part in the

days of Fleurus and Juliers, caused Maestricht to capitulate, taken Altdorf, and protected Jourdan's retreat against an army twice as numerous as his own. In 1797 the Directory sent him with seventeen thousand men to Bonaparte, — these seventeen thousand men being old soldiers of his own, of Kléber, Marceau, Hoche, and Sambre-et-Meuse; and then he had forgotten his rivalry, and seconded Bonaparte with all his might, — taking his share in the passage of the Tagliamento; conquering Gradiska, Trieste, Laybach, and Idria; coming after the campaign to bring back to the Directory the flags taken from the enemy, and accepting, perhaps unwillingly, the embassy to Vienna, while Bonaparte secured chief command of the army in Egypt. At Vienna, a disturbance created by the raising of the tri-colored flag over the ambassador's door — a disturbance for which the ambassador could obtain no satisfaction — obliged him to demand his passports. Upon his return to Paris he was appointed minister of war by the Directory. The subtlety of Sieyès, who was eclipsed by Bernadotte's republicanism, led the latter to offer his resignation; it was accepted, and when Bonaparte landed at Fréjus, Bernadotte had been for three months replaced by Dubois-Crancé.

Since Bonaparte's return, some of Bernadotte's friends had tried to have him recalled to the ministry; but Bonaparte had opposed the measure. This had caused hostility, not the less real for being covert, between the two generals. Bernadotte's presence in Bonaparte's salon was therefore almost as extraordinary as that of Moreau, and the entrance of the conqueror of Maestricht was remarked by as many as that of the conqueror of Rastadt had been. Only, instead of advancing to meet him, as he had done with Moreau, Bonaparte contented himself with waiting until he approached.

Bernadotte, from the threshold, cast a rapid glance around the room. He distinguished and analyzed the groups, and although he perceived Bonaparte in the centre of the principal one, he approached Josephine, who was half reclining upon a sofa, as beautiful as the statue of Agrippina in the Pitti Palace. He saluted her with all the courtesy of a chevalier, addressed a few compliments to her, inquired for her health, and only then looked about to see where he should find Bonaparte.

Everything had too much significance at such a moment for each one not to remark this affectation of courtesy on the part of Bernadotte. Bonaparte, with his rapid and comprehensive mind, was not the last to notice it; he became impatient, and instead of waiting for Bernadotte where he was, he moved towards the embrasure of a window, as if he dared the ex-minister of war to follow him.

Bernadotte bowed gracefully right and left, and, commanding his ordinarily mobile countenance, he advanced towards Bonaparte, who awaited him as a duellist awaits his adversary, with his right foot forward and his lips compressed. The two men bowed; Bonaparte, however, made no motion towards extending his hand to Bernadotte, and neither did the latter attempt to take it.

"Ah, is it you?" said Bonaparte. "I am very glad to see you."

"Thanks, General," replied Bernadotte, "I came here because I thought I owed you some explanation."

"I did not recognize you at first."

"And yet it seemed to me, General, that the servant announced my name in a sufficiently loud and clear voice to prevent any doubt of my identity."

"Yes; but he announced General Bernadotte."

"Well?"

"Well, I saw a man in citizen's clothes; and while I recognized your name, I could not believe it was you."

For some time Bernadotte had affected to wear a citizen's dress, in preference to his uniform. "You know," he replied laughing, "that I am not more than half a soldier; citizen Sieyès is trying to reform me."

"It seems it was a fortunate thing for me that you were not in power when I landed at Fréjus."

"Why?"

"I have been told that if you had received the order to stop me for having neglected to take sanitary precautions, you would have obeyed it."

"I said so, and I repeat it, General. As a soldier, I have always been a faithful observer of discipline; as a minister I should be a slave to the law."

Bonaparte bit his lips. "And you can say after that that you have not a personal enmity towards me!"

"A personal enmity towards you, General!" repeated Bernadotte. "Why should I have? We have always held very nearly the same rank, and I was even made a general before you; my campaigns on the Rhine, while less brilliant than yours on the Adige, were not less profitable for the Republic; and when I had the honor to serve under your orders in Italy, I hope you found in me a lieutenant who was devoted, if not to the man, at least to the country. It is true that since your departure, General, I have been more fortunate than you; I have not had the command of a great army which, if Kléber's last despatches can be believed, you left in an unfortunate position."

"What! Kléber's last despatches! Has Kléber written?"

"Did you not know it, General? Has the Directory failed to acquaint you with the complaints of your suc-

cessor? That was a great mistake, and I am doubly happy in having the opportunity to set myself right in your opinion, and to tell you what they are saying of you."

Bonaparte fixed his piercing eyes on Bernadotte. "And what do they say of me?" he asked.

"They say that since you had determined to return, you should have brought the army with you."

"Did I have a fleet? And did you not know that Brueys had burned his?"

"Then they say, General, that since you could not bring the army with you, you should have stayed there with it."

"That is what I should have done if circumstances had not recalled me to France."

"What circumstances, General?"

"Your defeats."

"I beg your pardon, — you mean Schérer's defeats."

"They are yours also."

"I am not responsible for the generals who commanded the armies of the Rhine and Italy before I became minister of war. If we were to enumerate the defeats and victories which have taken place since that time, we should soon see on which side the balance lies."

"Do you mean to tell me that your affairs are in good condition?"

"No; but I do mean to say that they are not so badly off as you pretend to believe."

"As I pretend! To hear you, General, one would think that it was to my interest that France should be degraded in the eyes of strangers."

"I do not say so. But I do say that I came to establish with you the balance of our defeats and victories for the last three months; and as I have come for that, and am here in your house as an accused person —"

"Or as an accuser."

"As accused, first, — I will begin."

"And I," said Bonaparte, visibly uneasy, "I will listen."

"My ministry dates from the 30th Brairial, or the 8th of June, if you prefer to call it that. We will not quarrel over words."

"That is as much as to say that we will over other things."

Bernadotte continued without replying: "As I say, I entered the ministry on the 8th of June, a few days after the raising of the siege of St.-Jean-d'Acre."

Bonaparte bit his lips. "I did not raise the siege of St.-Jean-d'Acre until I had ruined the fortifications," he said.

"That is not what Kléber wrote; but it is none of my business." Then he added, smiling: "That was in the time of Clarke's ministry."

There was a moment of silence, during which Bonaparte endeavored to look Bernadotte out of countenance. Failing in this, he said: "Go on."

Bernadotte bowed and continued: "Perhaps never did a minister of war — and the records are there to prove what I say — perhaps never did a minister of war receive his portfolio under more critical circumstances. Civil war in the interior, the stranger at our gates, discouragement in our old armies, and the most absolute lack of means to establish new ones, — that was my condition on the evening of the 8th of June; but I had already entered upon my duties. From that time an active correspondence established with the civil and military authorities reanimated their courage and their hopes. My addresses to the armies — perhaps I am wrong — are not those of a minister to his soldiers, but of a comrade to his comrades,

just as my addresses to the administrators are those of one citizen to others. I appealed to the courage of the army and to the heart of the French, and I obtained all that I asked for; the national guard was organized with fresh zeal, legions were formed on the Rhine and the Moselle, battalions of veterans took the place of old regiments to reinforce those who were defending our frontiers; to-day our cavalry has been recruited with forty thousand horses, and a hundred thousand conscripts, clothed, armed, and equipped, welcome with cries of 'Vive la République!' the flags under which they are to fight and conquer."

"But," interrupted Bonaparte, sharply, "you are making apologies for yourself."

"Very well; I will divide my discourse into two parts. The first one will be an apology, if you choose to call it so; the second will be an exposition of facts. Leaving the apology, I pass now to the facts. On the 17th and 18th of June came the battle of Trebbia. Macdonald wanted to fight without Moreau; he crossed the Trebbia, attacked the enemy, was beaten, and fell back upon Modena. On the 20th of June was the battle of Tortona; Moreau beat the Austrian Bellegarde. On the 22d of July came the capitulation of the citadel of Alexandria to the Austro-Russians; the balance is in favor of defeat. On the 30th the surrender of Mantua; another check! On the 15th of August, the battle of Novi; this was more than a check, — it was a defeat. Take note of it, General, for it was the last. While we were being beaten at Novi, Masséna was holding his positions at Zug and Lucerne, and strengthening himself upon the Aar and the Rhine, while Lecourbe, on the 14th and 15th of August, took the St.-Gothard. On the 19th came the battle of Bergen; Brune defeated the Anglo-Russian army, fifty-four thousand strong, and captured the Russian general Hermann. On the 25th, 26th,

and 27th of the same month came the battles of Zurich; Masséna conquered the Austro-Russians, commanded by Korsakoff, Hotze and three other Austrian generals were taken, and three were killed; the enemy lost twelve thousand men, a hundred pieces of artillery, and all their baggage; the Austrians, separated from the Russians, could not rejoin them until they were beyond Lake Constance. And that was the end of the progress which the enemy had been steadily making since the beginning of the campaign; after Zurich was retaken, France was safe from further invasion. On the 30th of August Molitor beat the Austrian generals Jellachich and Linken, and drove them back to the Grisons. On the 1st of September Molitor attacked and beat General Rosemberg in the Muttathal. On the 2d Molitor compelled Souvaroff to evacuate Glaris, abandoning his wounded, his cannon, and sixteen hundred prisoners. On the 6th General Brune conquered for the second time the Anglo-Russians, commanded by the Duke of York. On the 7th General Gazan left Constance. On the 9th you landed near Fréjus.

"Well, General," continued Bernadotte, "since France is likely to pass into your hands, it is best for you to know the condition of things when you take it; and in default of a receipt, a statement of these facts will serve to show its situation. We are making history, General, and it is important that those who will have an interest in falsifying it some day should find that Bernadotte has given them the lie."

"Do you say that for my benefit, General?"

"I say it for the benefit of flatterers. They say that your excuse for coming home is that you have returned because our armies were destroyed, because France was threatened, and the Republic in distress. Perhaps you held these opinions when you left Egypt; but now that

you have reached France, this fear must disappear and give place to the contrary belief."

"I ask nothing better than to be of your opinion, General," replied Bonaparte, with great dignity; "and the more powerful you prove France to be, the more grateful I shall be to those to whom she owes her power and grandeur."

"Oh, it is perfectly clear, General. Three armies beaten and dispersed, the Russians exterminated, the Austrians conquered and routed; twenty thousand prisoners, a hundred pieces of artillery, fifteen flags, and all the baggage of the enemy in our power; nine generals captured or killed, the Swiss free, our frontiers assured, and the Rhine proud to serve as their boundary, — this is the contingent of Masséna, and the situation of Helvetia. The Anglo-Russian army twice conquered, entirely discouraged, abandoning its artillery, stores, and magazines of war to us; even the women and children landing with the English, who looked upon themselves as already masters of Holland; eight thousand French and Batavian prisoners restored to their country, and Holland completely evacuated, — this is the contingent of Brune, and the situation of Holland. The rear guard of General Klenau forced to lay down its arms at Villanova; a thousand prisoners and three pieces of artillery fallen into our hands, and the Austrians driven back beyond the Bormida; in all, including the battles of the Stura and Pignerol, four thousand prisoners, sixteen cannon, the occupation of all the country between the Stura and the Tanaro, — this is the contingent of Championnet and the situation of Italy. Two hundred thousand soldiers under arms, forty thousand mounted horsemen, — that is my own contingent, and the situation of France."

"But," asked Bonaparte, mockingly, "if you have, as

you say, two hundred and forty thousand soldiers under arms, what do you care for the fifteen or twenty thousand men whom I have in Egypt, and who are useful yonder for purposes of colonization?"

"If I ask you for them, General, it is not because we need them, but because I fear that they will meet with harm."

"And what harm could come to them, commanded by Kléber?"

"Kléber may be killed, General; and who is behind him? Menou. Kléber and your twenty thousand men are lost, General."

"Lost?"

"Yes, the sultan will send troops; he has the land. The English will send fleets; they have the sea. We have neither land nor sea, and we shall be obliged to watch from a distance the evacuation of Egypt and the capitulation of our army."

"You are looking on the dark side of things, General."

"The future will tell which of us has seen things as they are."

"What would you have done in my place?"

"I do not know; but even if I had had to take them around by way of Constantinople, I would not have abandoned those whom France had confided to my care. Xenophon, on the border of the Tigre, was in a more desperate situation than you on the borders of the Nile; he brought back the ten thousand from Ionia. And these ten thousand were not natives of Athens; they were not even his fellow-countrymen; they were only hired mercenaries."

Bonaparte had not heard a word since Constantinople had been mentioned; it seemed as if this name had awakened new ideas in his mind, and that he was follow-

ing his own thoughts. He put one hand on the astonished Bernadotte's arm, and with dreamy eyes, like one who follows in space the flight of a vanquished project, he said, —

"Yes, yes! I thought of it; and that was why I was so determined to take that insignificant St.-Jean-d'Acre. You people here saw in it only my obstinacy, the useless loss of men, sacrificed to the vanity of a mediocre general who feared to be reproached for a defeat. What would the lifting of the siege of St.-Jean-d'Acre have mattered to me, if St.-Jean-d'Acre had not been a barrier placed before one of the most magnificent projects that ever was conceived? Cities! I would have taken as many of them as Alexander and Cæsar; but I had to take St.-Jean-d'Acre first. If I had taken that, do you know what I would have done?"

His burning eyes were fixed upon Bernadotte, who this time lowered his own beneath the flame of genius.

"What I would have done," said Bonaparte, seeming, like Ajax, to menace heaven with his fist, "if I had taken St.-Jean-d'Acre, would have been to find in the city the treasures of the pasha and arms for three hundred thousand men. I should have raised and armed all Syria, which had become so indignant at the ferocity of Djezzar that at each one of my assaults the people prayed for his downfall. I should have marched upon Damascus and Aleppo; I should have increased my army with all the malcontents. As I advanced into the country I should have announced to the people the abolition of servitude, and the overthrow of the tyrannical government of the pashas. I should have arrived at Constantinople with an immense army; I should have overthrown the Turkish army, and founded in Constantinople a great empire, which would have fixed my place in posterity above that

of Constantine and Mahomet II. Finally, perhaps I should have returned to Paris by way of Adrianople or Vienna, after having annihilated the House of Austria. Ah, well, my dear general, this is the project which was made abortive by that miserable St.-Jean-d'Acre." And he so far forgot to whom he was speaking, rapt as he was in the *débris* of his vanished dream, that he actually called Bernadotte "my dear general."

The latter, almost frightened at the grandeur of the project which had just been revealed to him, had started back. "Yes," he said, "I see what you want; you have just betrayed yourself. Be it in the Orient or the Occident, you want a throne! A throne? Well, why not? You may count on me to help you conquer it; but it must be elsewhere than in France. "I am a republican, and a republican I will die."

Bonaparte shook his head as if to drive away the thoughts which beset him. "I am a republican too," he said; "but see what your republic has come to!"

"What does it matter?" exclaimed Bernadotte. "I am faithful neither to the word nor the form, but to the principle. Let the Directors only give me the power, and I will defend the Republic from its enemies at home as zealously as I have done from those abroad."

As he said these words, Bernadotte raised his eyes, and his look met that of Bonaparte. Two naked swords could not have clashed with a more terrible and burning light.

For a long time Josephine had been uneasily watching the two men. She saw the double look full of mutual menace. She rose quickly, and going to Bernadotte, said, —

"General!"

Bernadotte bowed.

"You are acquainted with Gohier, are you not?"

"He is one of my best friends, Madame," he replied.

"Well, we are to dine there the day after to-morrow, the 18th Brumaire; come and join us there, and bring your wife. I should be very happy to know her."

"Madame," said Bernadotte, "in the time of the Greeks you would have been one of the three Graces; in the Middle Ages you would have been a fairy; in our day, you are the most adorable woman I know." And stepping back as he bowed, he contrived to retire without including Bonaparte in his parting salute.

Josephine followed him with her eyes until he had gone. Then she turned to her husband.

"Well," she said, "so Bernadotte is not like Moreau?"

"Enterprising, bold, disinterested, a sincere republican, inaccessible to bribery. He is a human obstacle; he must be turned aside, since he cannot be overthrown." And leaving the salon without taking leave of any one, he went up to his office, whither Roland and Bourrienne followed him.

They had been there scarcely a quarter of an hour when the door was softly opened, and Lucien appeared.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PLAN FOR A DECREE.

LUCIEN was evidently expected. Bonaparte had not once pronounced his name since they had entered the room; but although he was silent, he had with increasing impatience turned his head three or four times towards the door, and when the young man appeared an exclamation of satisfaction escaped from his lips.

Lucien was the general's youngest brother. He was born in 1775, and was therefore scarcely twenty-five years old. Since 1797, when he was twenty-two years old, he had been a member of the Council of the Five Hundred, who, to honor Bonaparte, had just nominated him its president. With Bonaparte's projects nothing could have been more fortunate. Frank and loyal, and a republican at heart, Lucien, in seconding his brother's plans, believed that he was serving the Republic even more than the future First Consul. In his opinion, no one could save it better a second time than the man who had already saved it once. Animated with this sentiment, he came in search of his brother.

"Here you are," said Bonaparte; "I have been impatiently expecting you."

"I suspected as much; but I had to wait for an opportunity to leave the room when I should not be noticed."

"And do you think you succeeded?"

"Yes; Talma was telling some story or other about Marat and Dumouriez. Although it appeared to be very

interesting, I deprived myself of the pleasure of listening to it for the sake of coming here."

"I just heard wheels. Did not the person who went away in the carriage see you coming upstairs?"

"The person was myself; the carriage was mine. If my carriage is absent, every one will think that I have gone also."

Bonaparte drew a long breath. "Well," he asked, "and how have you spent your day?"

"It has not been lost time."

"Shall we have the decree of the Council of the Ancients?"

"We drew it up to-day, and I have brought the rough draft to you, for you to see if there is anything to be cut out or added."

"Let me see it," said Bonaparte. And hastily taking from Lucien's hand the paper which he gave him, he read: —

"*Art.* 1. The legislative body is transferred to the commune of St.-Cloud; the two branches will convene in the two wings of the palace."

"That is the important article," said Lucien. "I put it at the head so that the people might see it immediately."

"Yes, yes," said Bonaparte. And he continued: —

"*Art* 2. They will go there to-morrow, the 20th Brumaire —

"No, no!" said Bonaparte; "to-morrow the 19th. Change the date, Bourrienne." And he passed the paper to his secretary. "You think everything will be ready for the 18th?"

"Yes. Fouché said to me, day before yesterday, 'Hurry things up, or I will answer for nothing.'"

"19th Brumaire," said Bourrienne, returning the paper to the general.

Bonaparte continued : —

"*Art.* 2. They will go there to-morrow, the 19th Brumaire, at noon. All continuation of deliberations is forbidden at any other place, or before that date."

Bonaparte reread the article. "That is right," he said. "There can be no double meaning there." And he continued : —

"*Art.* 3. General Bonaparte is charged with the execution of this decree ; he will take all necessary measures for the safety of the national representation."

A mocking smile passed over the firm lips of the reader ; but he continued almost immediately : —

"The general commanding the seventeenth military division, the guard of the legislative corps, the established national guard, the troops of the line who are in the commune of Paris, the constitutional district, and the whole extent of the seventeenth division are put immediately under his orders, and commanded to recognize him as their commander."

"Add, Bourrienne, 'All citizens will, upon request, aid him in keeping order.' The townsfolk delight in being mixed up in political affairs, and when we can make it serve our own ends, it is just as well to give them that pleasure."

Bourrienne obeyed ; then he returned the paper to the general, who continued : —

"*Art.* 4. General Bonaparte is called before the Council to receive a copy of this decree, and to take oath. He will act in concert with the commissary inspectors of the two Councils.

"*Art.* 5. The present decree will be immediately transmitted by messenger to the Council of the Five Hundred and to the Executive Directory. It will be printed, sealed and sent to all the communes of the Republic by special couriers.

"PARIS, the — "

"The date is blank," said Lucien.

"Put '18th Brumaire,' Bourrienne; the decree must surprise every one. Given out at seven o'clock in the morning, it must at once, or even before that time, be affixed to the walls of Paris."

"But if the Ancients refuse to ratify it?"

"So much the more reason for having it posted, idiot!" returned Bonaparte; "we will act as if it *had* been ratified." Then, after a second's reflection, he added: "As for what you have just said about fearing that the decree might not be passed, there is a very simple means for gaining that point."

"What is it?"

"It is to summon for six o'clock in the morning the members of whom we are sure, and for eight o'clock those of whom we are doubtful. Having only our own men, it will go hard if we fail to get a majority."

"But six o'clock for some, and eight o'clock for others —" said Lucien.

"Take two different secretaries; then one of them will have made a mistake." Then, turning towards Bourrienne, he said: "Write!"

And while he walked back and forth he dictated unhesitatingly, like one who has well considered beforehand what he is about to say, stopping from time to time before Bourrienne, to see if the secretary's pen followed his words.

"CITIZENS! — The Council of the Ancients, the repository of national wisdom, has just ratified the subjoined decree; it is authorized in this Act by Articles 102 and 103 of the constitutional Act.

"It has charged me with the duty of taking measures for the safety of the national representatives, and for their necessary and temporary removal."

Bourrienne looked at Bonaparte. The latter would have liked to substitute "immediate" for "temporary;" but as the general did not correct himself, Bourrienne left the word "temporary." Bonaparte continued to dictate:—

"The legislative body will also find itself called upon to rescue the Administration from the imminent danger to which the disorganization of all parties of the Administration has exposed it.

"In these circumstances, it needs the union and the confidence of all patriots. Rally around it! It is the sole means of establishing the Republic upon the basis of civil liberty and prosperity, of victory and of peace."

Bonaparte read over this proclamation, and made a sign with his head to indicate that it was correct. Then he drew out his watch. "Eleven o'clock," he said; "there is still time." Then, taking Bourrienne's place, he wrote a short note, sealed it, and addressed it to "Citizen Barras."

"Roland," he said when he had finished, "take a horse from the stable, or a carriage from the square, and go to Barras's house. I have asked of him a rendezvous for to-morrow at midnight. There will be an answer."

Roland went out. A moment afterwards they heard the galloping of a horse, going off in the direction of the Rue du Mont-Blanc.

"Now, Bourrienne," said Bonaparte, after listening to the sound, "to-morrow at midnight, whether I am at home or not, you will get into my carriage and go in my place to Barras."

"In your place, General?"

"Yes; all day long he will be expecting me in the evening, and will do nothing, thinking that I am about to put him in my party. At midnight you will go to him and tell him that a distressing headache has obliged me to go to bed, but that I will come to him at seven o'clock

in the morning, without fail. He may believe you, and he may not, but all events it will be too late for him to do anything against us; and at seven o'clock in the morning I shall have ten thousand men under my orders."

"Very well, General. Have you any other commands for me?"

"No, not this evening," replied Bonaparte; "come here early to-morrow."

"And I?" asked Lucien.

"Go and see Sieyès. He holds the Council of the Ancients in the hollow of his hand; make all your arrangements with him. I do not care to have him seen here, and neither do I want to be seen at his house; if by any chance we should fail, he is just the man to abjure his share in the matter. On the day after to-morrow I want to be master of my own time, and to have no positive engagements with any one."

"Shall you need me to-morrow?"

"Come at night and report."

"Are you going back to the salon?"

"No; I shall wait for Josephine in her own apartments. Bourrienne, as you pass her, whisper a word in her ear, so that she may get away as soon as possible." And saluting his brother and Bourrienne, he sought Josephine's room through a private passage which communicated directly with his office.

In that room, lighted only by the gleam of an alabaster lamp, which made the conspirator's forehead seem paler than ever, Bonaparte listened to the carriages as they rolled away one after another. Finally the last one departed, and five minutes later the door opened and Josephine entered. She was alone, and held in her hand a candlestick with two branches. Her face, in the double light, was full of the keenest anxiety.

"Well," said Bonaparte, "what is the matter?"

"I am afraid," said Josephine.

"Of what, — of those idiots of the Directory, or of the lawyers of the two Councils? Come! of the Ancients, Sieyès is with me; and of the Five Hundred, I have Lucien."

"Is all going well, then?"

"Wonderfully well."

"When you sent word that you were waiting for me, I was afraid you had some bad news for me."

"If I had bad news, do you suppose I would tell you?"

"How reassuring that is!"

"But do not be uneasy; I have none. However, I have given you a part in the conspiracy."

"What is it?"

"Sit down there and write to Gohier."

"That we will not dine with him?"

"On the contrary, ask him to come with his wife and breakfast with us. When persons love each other as much as we do, they cannot see too much of each other."

Josephine seated herself at a rosewood secretary. "Dictate," she said, "and I will write."

"What! so that they may recognize my style? Oh, come! you know better than I how to write one of those charming little notes which are so irresistible."

Josephine smiled at the compliment, held up her forehead for the loving kiss which Bonaparte pressed upon it, and wrote this note, which we copy from the original: —

To Citizen GOHIER, President of the executive Directory of the French Republic:

"Is that right?" she asked.

"Perfect! As he will not have the title of president much longer, we will not grudge it to him."

"JOSEPHINE SEATED HERSELF AT A ROSEWOOD SECRETARY."

Drawn by E. Van Muyden.

THE COMPANIONS OF JEHU, I. 234.

"Shall you do nothing for him then?"

"I will do anything that he likes, if he will do as I say. Go on, my dearest."

Josephine took up her pen and wrote:—

MY DEAR GOHIER, — Come to-morrow, with your wife, and breakfast with me, at eight o'clock in the morning. Do not fail to come; I want to talk with you upon a very interesting subject.

Adieu, my dear Gohier. Believe me to be always your affectionate friend,

LA PAGERIE-BONAPARTE.

"I said to-morrow," remarked Josephine; "I shall have to date my letter the 17th Brumaire."

"And you will not be telling a falsehood," said Bonaparte, "for it is striking midnight now."

In fact another day had fallen into the abyss of time, for the clock was striking twelve. Bonaparte listened to the strokes, gravely and thoughtfully. There were only twenty-four hours more between him and the solemn day for which he had been preparing for more than a month, and of which he had dreamed for three years. Let us do what he would like to have done; let us leap over the twenty-four hours which separate us from that day of which history has not yet judged, and see what was passing at seven o'clock in the morning in the different parts of Paris which were to be most affected by the events that we are about to relate.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ALEA JACTA EST.

At seven o'clock in the morning, Fouché, the minister of police, entered the house of Gohier, president of the Directory.

"Ah," said Gohier, when he saw him, "what is new now that gives me the pleasure of seeing you so early?"

"Then you have not yet seen the decree?" asked Fouché.

"What decree?" asked the honest Gohier.

"The decree of the Council of the Ancients."

"Ratified when?"

"Last night."

"Does the Council of the Ancients meet in the night now?"

"When there is urgent business, yes."

"And what does the decree say?"

"It transfers the place of meeting of the legislative body to St.-Cloud."

Gohier felt the blow, and understood the part that Bonaparte's genius had taken in this. "And how long is it," he asked, "since the minister of police was transformed into a messenger of the Council of the Ancients?"

"That is where you are mistaken, citizen President," replied the other. "I am more the minister of police this morning than ever, for I have come to denounce to you an act which may have the most serious consequences."

Fouché did not know how the conspiracy in the Rue de la Victoire would turn, and he was not sorry to open a door of retreat to the Luxembourg.

But Gohier, honest as he was, knew the man too well to be his dupe. "You should have told me of this decree yesterday, and not this morning," he said; "for as it is, you have only forestalled by a few minutes the official announcement which will be made to me."

In fact, the door opened at that moment, and a hussar announced that an envoy from the palace of the Ancients was waiting to give him a message.

"Let him enter," said Gohier.

The messenger entered and presented a letter to the president. The latter quickly broke the seal and read: —

CITIZEN PRESIDENT, — The Commission hastens to announce to you the decree of removal of the legislative body to St.-Cloud. The decree will be sent to you at once, but measures of safety demand details which now occupy us.

We hereby invite you to attend the Commission of the Ancients. You will find Sieyès and Ducos there.

With a brotherly salute,

BARILLON.
FARGUES.
CORNET.

"Very well," said Gohier to the messenger, dismissing him with a sign.

The messenger went out. Gohier turned to Fouché.

"Ah," he said, "the plot is well laid; they announce the decree to me, but do not send it to me. Fortunately, you can tell me its terms."

"But I know nothing of it," said Fouché.

"What! there has been a meeting of the Council of the Ancients, and you, the minister of police, know nothing about it, even although it is a special meeting?"

"Oh, yes; I knew about the meeting, but I was not able to be present."

"And you did not have one of your secretaries there, or a stenographer, who could give you a detailed account of this meeting, although in all probability it is one which will change the destiny of France? Ah, citizen Fouché, you are either a very awkward or a very clever minister of police!"

"Have you any orders to give me?" inquired Fouché.

"None," replied the president. "If the Directory sees fit to give orders, it will give them to men whom it deems worthy of its confidence. You can go back to those who sent you," he added, turning his back.

Fouché went out, and Gohier rang immediately. A servant entered.

"Go to the houses of Barras, Sieyès, Ducos, and Moulin, and ask them to come here immediately. Ah, and at the same time ask Mme. Gohier to come here to me, and to bring the letter from Mme. Bonaparte, inviting us to breakfast."

Five minutes later Mme. Gohier entered, dressed to go out, with the letter in her hand. The invitation was for eight o'clock, and it was then half-past seven, and it would take at least twenty minutes to go from the Luxembourg to the Rue de la Victoire.

"Here it is, my dear," said Mme. Gohier, handing the letter to her husband; "the invitation is for eight o'clock."

"Yes," said Gohier, "I was not doubtful of the hour, but of the day." And taking the letter from his wife's hands, he read: —

MY DEAR GOHIER, — Come to-morrow, with your wife, and breakfast with me, at eight o'clock in the morning. Do not fail to come; I want to talk with you upon a very interesting subject."

"Yes," he said, "there is no mistaking it."

"Well, are we going?" asked his wife.

"You will go, but I cannot. Something has occurred of which citizen Bonaparte is probably aware, and which keeps us, my colleagues and myself, at the Luxembourg."

"Something serious?"

"Perhaps."

"Then I shall stay with you."

"Not at all; you cannot be of the least use to me. Go to Mme. Bonaparte's. I may be mistaken; but if anything extraordinary takes place, anything which seems suspicious to you, send me word instantly, by some means or other, — almost any way will do; I shall understand."

"Very well, then; if I can be useful to you there, I will go."

"Do so."

Just then the servant entered. "General Moulin is coming at once," he said. "Citizen Barras is at his bath, but will be here very soon. Citizens Sieyès and Ducos went out at five o'clock this morning, and have not yet returned."

"There are the two traitors," said Gohier; "Barras is only a dupe." And kissing his wife, he said: "Go! go at once!"

As she turned, Mme. Gohier found herself face to face with General Moulin; he was naturally of a hasty temperament, and now he was much excited.

"I beg your pardon," he said. Then bursting into Gohier's office, he exclaimed: "Well, President, do you know what has happened?"

"No, but I have my suspicions."

"The legislative body is transferred to St.-Cloud; General Bonaparte is charged with the execution of the decree, and the armed force is put under his orders."

"Ah, that's the bottom of the bag!" said Gohier. "Well, we must unite our forces to resist."

"You have heard: Sieyès and Roger-Ducos are not at the palace."

"They are at the Tuileries! But Barras is at his bath; let us hasten to him. The Directory can make arrests the moment they have a majority; there are three of us. I repeat, let us resist!"

"Then we had better send word to Barras to come to us as soon as he leaves his bath."

"No; we will go and find him before he goes out."

The two Directors went out quickly in search of Barras. They found him at his bath, and insisted upon entering.

"What is it?" asked Barras, when he saw them.

"Don't you know?"

"Nothing at all."

They told him what they knew.

"Ah," said Barras; "that explains everything."

"What?"

"Yes, that is why he did not come last evening."

"Who?"

"Bonaparte."

"You expected him last evening?"

"He sent word to me by one of his *aides-de-camp* that he would be here between eleven and twelve o'clock."

"And he did not come?"

"No; he sent Bourrienne to me in his carriage to say that a violent headache kept him in bed, but that he would be here early this morning."

The Directors looked at each other. "It is perfectly clear," they said.

"I have already," continued Barras, "sent Bollot, my secretary, a very intelligent fellow, to go and look him up."

He rang, and a servant appeared. "As soon as citizen Bollot returns," said Barras, "send him here."

"He is just getting out of the carriage."

"Send him up at once!"

Bollot was already at the door.

"Well?" asked the three Directors.

"Well, General Bonaparte in full uniform, accompanied by Generals Beurnonville, Macdonald, and Moreau, is on his way to the Tuileries, where ten thousand men await him."

"Moreau! Is Moreau with him?" exclaimed Gohier.

"At his right hand."

"I always told you so," said Moulin, with military bluntness. "Moreau is a sneak, and nothing else."

"Do you think we had better resist, Barras?" asked Gohier.

"Yes," replied Barras.

"Well then, dress yourself, and come to us in the Hall of Debates."

After waiting ten minutes, Moulin said: "We shall have to wait a good while for Barras. If Moreau is a sneak, Barras is a turncoat!"

Two hours later they were still waiting for Barras. After they had left the bath-room, Talleyrand and Bruix had entered it; and in talking with them, Barras had forgotten that he was expected elsewhere.

Now let us turn to the Rue de la Victoire.

At seven o'clock, as usual, Bonaparte was up, and waiting in his room, dressed in full uniform. Roland entered. Bonaparte was perfectly calm, for he was on the eve of a battle.

"Has no one come yet, Roland?" he asked.

"No, General," replied the young man; "but I heard carriage wheels just now."

"So did I," said Bonaparte.

Just then Joseph Bonaparte and General Bernadotte were announced. Roland looked inquiringly at Bonaparte. Should he go or stay? He was to stay. Roland remained standing at the corner of a bookcase, like a sentinel at his post.

"Ah," said Bonaparte, seeing Bernadotte, as on the previous night, dressed in civilian's clothes, "You seem to have a horror of a uniform, General."

"Why should I put on a uniform at seven o'clock in the morning," asked Bernadotte, "when I am not on duty?"

"You will be soon."

"Oh, I am not in active service."

"I will set you to work."

"You?"

"Yes, I."

"In the name of the Directory?"

"Does the Directory still exist?"

"What! does it not?"

"On your way here, did you not see soldiers marshalled in the streets leading to the Tuileries?"

"I saw them, and wondered at it."

"Those soldiers are mine."

"I beg your pardon," said Bernadotte, "I was under the impression that they belonged to France."

"Well, France and I are one."

"I did not know that," returned Bernadotte, coldly.

"Well, you suspect it now, and this evening you will be sure of it. Come, Bernadotte! this is a critical moment; choose!"

"General," said Bernadotte, "at present I am only a common citizen; permit me to remain one."

"Bernadotte, take care! he who is not for me is against me."

"General, be careful what you say; you said 'Take care!' If that is a threat, you know I do not care for it."

Bonaparte went up to him and took both his hands. "Yes, I know it," he said, "and that is why I am so anxious to have you with us. I not only esteem you, Bernadotte, but I like you. I will leave you with Joseph; you are brothers-in-law, and relatives should not quarrel."

"And where are you going?"

"Here is a decree, ratified last night by the council of Five Hundred, which confers upon me the immediate command of the armed force of Paris. I was therefore right when I told you that the soldiers you met were mine, since they are under my orders." And he put into Bernadotte's hands a copy of the decree which had been ratified at six o'clock that morning.

Bernadotte read it through, from the first line to the last. "I have nothing to say to this," he remarked. "If you watch over the safety of the national representatives, all good citizens will be on your side."

"Be on my side yourself, then."

"Permit me, General, to wait twenty-four hours longer, to see how you fulfil your trust."

"You are a devil of a man!" said Bonaparte. Then taking him by the arm and drawing him towards Joseph, he said: "Bernadotte, I want to be frank with you."

"What is the use," replied the latter, "since I am not of your party?"

"Never mind; you are in the audience, and I want the audience to bear witness that I have not cheated."

"Do you ask secrecy of me?"

"No."

"You do well, for otherwise I should have refused to listen to your confidences."

"Oh, my confidences are not long ones. Your Directory is detested, your Constitution is worn out; we must clear out the whole thing, and give another direction to the government. You do not reply!"

"I am waiting to hear what else you have to tell me."

"The rest that I have to say is to tell you to go and put on your uniform. I cannot wait for you any longer; you will join me at the Tuileries, in the midst of my comrades."

Bernadotte shook his head.

"You think you can count on Moreau, Beurnonville, and Lefebvre," continued Bonaparte. "Here! look out of the window! What do you see there? Moreau and Beurnonville! and as for Lefebvre, although I do not see him, I am sure that I shall not go a hundred feet without meeting him. Well, have you decided?"

"General," replied Bernadotte, "I am never influenced by an example, particularly when it is a bad one. Let Moreau, Beurnonville, and Lefebvre do as they like, and I will do as I ought."

"Then you positively refuse to accompany me to the Tuileries?"

"I do not wish to take part in a rebellion."

"A rebellion! and against whom? Against a lot of fools who quibble from morning to night."

"These fools, General, are in this movement the representatives of the law, and the Constitution protects them; they are sacred for me."

"At all events, promise me one thing, bar of iron that you are!"

"What is it?"

"To remain neutral."

"As a citizen, I will remain neutral; but —"

"But what? Come, I have opened my heart to you; now be frank with me."

"But if the Directory orders me to act, I shall march against the insurgents, whoever they may be."

"Then you think me ambitious?" said Bonaparte.

Bernadotte smiled. "I suspect it," he said.

"Ah, how little you know me!" said Bonaparte. "I have had enough of politics; and if there is one thing I desire above all others, it is peace. Ah, give me Malmaison, with an income of fifty thousand pounds, and I will say good-by to everything else. You do not believe me? I invite you to come and see me in three months, and if you like country life, we will agree. Well, *au revoir!* I will leave you with Joseph, and in spite of your refusal I will expect you at the Tuileries. There! our friends are getting impatient."

They could hear shouts of "Vive Bonaparte!" Bernadotte grew pale.

Bonaparte noted the fact. "Ah," he murmured, "jealous!"

As Bonaparte had said, his friends were getting impatient. Since the decree had been posted, an hour before, the ante-chambers and courtyard of the house had been thronged. The first person whom Bonaparte met at the top of the staircase was his fellow-countryman, Colonel Sebastiani. He commanded the Ninth regiment of dragoons.

"Ah, is it you, Sebastiani?" said Bonaparte. "And your men?"

"Are drawn up in line of battle in the Rue de la Victoire, General."

"Are they well disposed?"

"Enthusiastic! I have distributed ten thousand cartridges among them, which were stored with me."

"Yes; but which were not to have been removed without an order from the commandant of Paris. Do you know that you have burned your bridges behind you, Sebastiani?"

"Take me with you in your ship, General. I have faith in your fortunes."

"Do you take me for Cæsar, Sebastiani?"

"By my faith, one might make a worse mistake than that! There are, besides, in the courtyard of your house about forty officers, who are armed in all sorts of ways, who have not received their pay, and for whom the Directory has not provided suitably for a year past: their only hope is in you, General; they are ready to die for you."

"It is well. Go and put yourself at the head of your regiment, and say good-by to it."

"Good-by! and what for, General?"

"Because I am going to give you a brigade instead. Go!"

Sebastiani did not need to be told twice. Bonaparte continued on his way. At the foot of the staircase he met Lefebvre.

"It is I, General," said Lefebvre.

"You! And where is the Seventeenth military division?"

"I am waiting for my appointment, in order to bring it into action."

"Are you not appointed?"

"By the Directory, yes; but as I am not a traitor I have just sent in my resignation, so that they might know that they could not count on me."

"And so you have come for me to appoint you, that I may be able to depend upon the genuineness of your commission, eh?"

"Exactly!"

"Quick, Roland, a commission in blank; fill it out with the general's name, so that I shall only have to sign my own. I will do it in the saddle."

"It will be just as good," said Lefebvre.

"Roland!" The young man, who had already taken a few steps to obey the order, turned and approached the general. "Take from my mantelpiece," said Bonaparte, in a low voice, "a pair of double-barrelled pistols which you will find there, and bring them to me at the same time. One never knows what may happen."

"Yes, General," said Roland; "besides, I shall not leave you."

"Not unless I want to send you elsewhere to be killed."

"That 's true," said the young man. And he ran to execute the double commission which he had just received.

Bonaparte was about to continue on his way when he perceived a shadow in the corridor. He recognized Josephine, and went at once to her.

"Oh," she said, "is there so much danger?"

"What do you mean?"

"I just heard the order you gave Roland."

"That is what you get by listening at doors. And Gohier?"

"He has not come."

"Nor his wife either?"

"His wife is there."

Bonaparte put Josephine aside with his hand, and entered the salon. Mme. Gohier was there alone, and very pale.

"Well," he said, without any preamble, "and so the general did not come?"

"It was impossible," replied Mme. Gohier.

Bonaparte made an impatient movement. "It is abso-

lutely necessary that he should come," he said, "write him that I expect him; I will have the letter sent."

"Thanks, General," replied Mme. Gohier. "My people are here; they will take charge of it."

"Write, my friend, write!" said Josephine. And she brought pen, ink, and paper to the president's wife.

Bonaparte placed himself where he could read over her shoulder as she wrote. Mme. Gohier looked at him steadily. He drew back a step and bowed. Mme. Gohier wrote. Then she folded the letter, and looked for wax; but whether by accident or premeditation, there were only wafers on the table. She put one upon the letter, and rang the bell. A servant appeared.

"Take this letter to Comtois," said Mme. Gohier, "and let him carry it instantly to the Luxembourg."

Bonaparte followed the servant, or rather the letter, with his eyes until the door shut. Then he said to Mme. Gohier: "I regret that I shall not be able to breakfast with you; but if the president has his affairs, so have I also mine. You will take breakfast with my wife. A good appetite to you!" And he went out. At the door he met Roland.

"Here is the commission, General," said the young man, "and here is the pen."

Bonaparte took the pen, and on the back of his *aide-de-camp's* hat signed the commission. Roland then gave him the two pistols. "Have you examined them?" he asked.

Roland smiled. "I will answer for them," he replied.

Bonaparte put the pistols into his belt, muttering as he did so, "I wish I knew what she wrote to her husband."

"I can tell you what she wrote, word for word," said Bourrienne.

"You, Bourrienne!"

"Yes; she wrote: 'You did well not to come, my dear; everything here tells me that the invitation was a decoy. I will rejoin you as soon as possible.'"

"Did you unseal the letter?"

"General, Sextus Pompey gave a dinner to Antony and Lepidus on board his galley; his freeman came to say to him, 'Shall I make you emperor of the world?' 'How so?' 'It is very simple; I have only to cut the cable of your galley, and Antony and Lepidus are your prisoners.' 'You should have done it without telling me,' replied Sextus; 'now you must not do it, for your life!' I remembered those words, General: 'You should have done it without telling me.'"

Bonaparte remained lost in thought for a moment; then rousing himself from his revery, he said: "You are wrong; it was Octavius, and not Antony, who was on the galley with Lepidus." And he went down to the court, limiting his reproach to correcting the historical error.

Scarcely had he appeared upon the step, when cries of "Vive Bonaparte!" resounded on all sides, and reaching the street awoke the same cry in the mouths of the dragoons stationed there.

"That is a good augury, General," said Roland.

"Yes; give Lefebvre his commission; and if he has no horse, give him one of mine. I will meet him in the court of the Tuileries."

"His division is already there."

"So much the better."

Then looking around him, Bonaparte saw Beurnonville and Moreau waiting for him; their horses were held by servants. He saluted them with a gesture which was more like that of a master than a comrade. Then, perceiving General Debel without his uniform, he descended two steps and went to him.

"Why are you in citizen's clothes?" he asked.

"General, I knew nothing of what was going on. I chanced to be passing through the street, and seeing a commotion before your house I came in, fearing that you were in some danger."

"Go at once and put on your uniform."

"I live at the other end of Paris; it would take too long." But at the same time he turned to go.

"What are you going to do?"

"I will manage it, General."

Debel had motioned to an artilleryman on horseback; the man was about his own figure. "My man," said he, "I am General Debel; by order of General Bonaparte, give me your coat and horse. I will excuse you from service to-day; here is a louis for you to go and drink to the health of the general-in-chief. To-morrow you may come to my house and get your coat and horse back again. I live on the Rue du Cherche-Midi, No. 11."

"And shall I get nothing more?"

"Yes; you will be appointed a brigadier."

"Good!" said the artilleryman. And he gave his uniform and horse to General Debel.

In the mean time Bonaparte had heard voices above him, and looking up he saw Joseph and Bernadotte at a window. "For the last time, General," he said to Bernadotte, "will you come with me?"

"No," replied the other, firmly. Then he added in a low voice: "You told me just now to take care."

"Yes."

"Well, now I tell you to take care!"

"Of what?"

"You are going to the Tuileries?"

"Yes."

"The Tuileries are very near the Place de la Révolution."

"Bah!" said Bonaparte, "the guillotine has been transferred to the Barrière du Trône."

"What does it matter? The brewer Santerre commands the Faubourg St.-Antoine, and Santerre is Moulin's friend."

"Santerre has been warned that at the first movement he attempts I will have him fired upon. Will you come?"

"No."

"As you please. You separate your fortunes from mine, but I do not separate mine from yours."

Then he called for his horse. It was brought to him. But seeing an artillery soldier near him, he said: "What are you doing here, in the midst of these officers?"

The artilleryman began to laugh. "Do you not recognize me, General?" he said.

"Why, upon my word, it is you, Debel! Where did you get that horse and uniform?"

"From that artilleryman whom you can see yonder, on foot and in his shirt-sleeves. It will cost you a brigadier's commission."

"It will cost me two commissions, Debel," returned Bonaparte, — "one for a brigadier, and one for a general of division. Forward, march, gentlemen! to the Tuileries."

And stooping upon his horse a little, as was his habit, his left hand holding the loose reins, and his right resting upon his thigh, his head bent forward, his brow thoughtful, and his look dreamy, Bonaparte took the first steps upon that road at once glorious and fatal, which was to lead him to a throne, — and to St. Helena.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE 18TH BRUMAIRE.

When he entered the Rue de la Victoire, Bonaparte found Sebastiani's dragoons drawn up in line of battle. He attempted to speak to them, but interrupting him at the first word, they exclaimed:—

"We do not need any explanations; we know that you desire only the good of the Republic. Vive Bonaparte!" And still shouting "Vive Bonaparte!" the procession passed through the streets which led from the Rue de la Victoire to the Tuileries.

General Lefebvre, true to his promise, was waiting at the gate of the palace.

Upon Bonaparte's arrival, he was saluted with the same shouts which had accompanied him on the road. He shook his head. Perhaps he was already dreaming of the time when, instead of "Vive Bonaparte!" he would hear shouts of "Vive Napoleon!" He advanced to the head of his troops, and surrounded by an immense staff, he read the decree of the Five Hundred, which transferred the meeting-place of the legislative body to St.-Cloud, and gave him the command of the military. Then from memory, or improvising (for Bonaparte never confided this kind of secret to any one), instead of the proclamation which he had dictated to Bourrienne, he pronounced this one:—

"Soldiers!—The special meeting of the Ancients has intrusted to me the command of the city and army. I have

accepted it in order to second the measures which it is about to adopt, and which are entirely in favor of the people.

"The Republic has been poorly governed for the past two years. You have hoped that my return would put an end to many evils; you have celebrated it by a union that imposes upon me the obligations which I am about to fulfil. On your side, you will fulfil your own obligations, and will second your general with the energy, firmness, and confidence which have always been noticeable in you. Liberty, victory, and peace will once more place the French Republic in the rank which it formerly occupied in Europe, and which it has lost only through foolishness and treachery."

The soldiers applauded frantically; it was a declaration of war against the Directory, and soldiers always applaud a declaration of war.

The general dismounted amid shouts and acclamations. He entered the Tuileries. It was the second time that he had crossed the threshold of the palace of the Valois, which had so ineffectually sheltered the crown and the head of the last Bourbon who had reigned there. Beside him marched citizen Roederer. When he recognized him, Bonaparte shuddered.

"Ah, citizen Roederer," he said, "you were here on the morning of the 10th of August?"

"Yes, General," replied the future count of the Empire.

"You advised Louis XVI. to give himself up to the National Assembly?"

"Yes."

"It was bad advice, citizen Roederer! I should not have followed it."

"One advises men according to their characters. I should not give General Bonaparte the advice which I gave King Louis XVI. When a king has among the records of his past the flight from Varennes and the 20th of June, it is difficult to save him."

As Roederer pronounced these words, they came to a window which looked out upon the garden of the Tuileries. Bonaparte stopped, and seizing Roederer by the arm, said: —

"On the 20th of June I was there," — and he pointed to the terrace on the border of the water, — "behind the third linden. I could see through the open window the poor king with his red cap on his head; he was a pitiful sight, and I was sorry for him."

"And what did you do?"

"Oh, I did nothing, — there was nothing I could do; I was only a lieutenant of artillery. But I longed to enter with the others and say to him softly, 'Sire, give me four pieces of artillery, and I will sweep away all this rabble for you!'"

What would have happened if Lieutenant Bonaparte had been able to carry out his desire, and, well received by Louis XVI., had in truth swept away the "rabble," — in other words, the people of Paris? If he had fought for the king on the 20th of June, would he not have been bound to fight for the Convention on the 13th Vendémiaire?

While the ex-procureur-syndic, lost in a brown study, was perhaps already composing in thought the first pages of his "History of the Consulate," Bonaparte presented himself at the bar of the Council of the Ancients, followed by his staff, who were in turn followed by all who cared to come. When the tumult caused by the arrival of this crowd had ceased, the president read to the general the decree which invested him with military power. Then, as he called upon him to take oath, he added:—

"He who has never in vain promised victories to his country cannot fail religiously to fulfil his new promise to ser- -d to remain faithful to it."

Bonaparte raised his hand, and said solemnly: "I swear it!"

All the generals in turn repeated after him, each one for himself: "I swear it!"

Scarcely had the last one finished, when Bonaparte caught sight of Barras's secretary, the same Bollot of whom the Director had spoken to his two colleagues in the morning. He had come merely to be able to give an account to his employer of what had taken place. Bonaparte, however, believed him to be charged by Barras with some secret mission. He resolved to spare him the first step, and walking straight up to him he said:—

"Have you come by order of the Directors?" Then, without giving him time to reply, he continued: "What have they done with the France that I left in such a brilliant condition? I left peace, and I find war; I left victories, and I find defeats; I left the millions gathered from Italy, and I find spoliation and misery. What has become of those hundred thousand Frenchmen whom I knew by name? They are dead!"

It was scarcely to the secretary of Barras that these things should have been said; but Bonaparte wanted to say them, and was unable to resist the desire. Little did he care to whom they were said; perhaps he even thought it would be better to say them to some one who could not reply.

Just then Sieyès rose. "Citizens," he said, "the Directors Moulin and Gohier desire to be admitted."

"They are no longer Directors," said Bonaparte, "because there is no longer a Directory."

"But," objected Sieyès, "they have not yet sent in their resignation."

"Let them enter, then, and give it," said Bonaparte.

Moulin and Gohier entered. They were pale but calm;

they knew that they were about to face a struggle, and that perhaps they might find Sinnamari behind their resistance. The exiles for which they had been responsible on the 18th Fructidor loomed up before them now.

"I am glad to see," Bonaparte hastened to say to them, "that you have yielded to our wishes and those of your two colleagues."

Gohier took a step forward, and said in a firm voice: "We have yielded neither to your wishes nor to those of our two colleagues, who are our colleagues no longer, since they have sent in their resignation; we have yielded to the voice of the law. The law demands that the decree which transfers to St.-Cloud the seat of the legislative body shall be proclaimed without delay; we have come to fulfil the duty thus imposed upon us by law, determined to defend it against those, whoever they may be, who attempt to attack it."

"Your zeal does not astonish us," replied Bonaparte, coldly; "and it is because you are known to be a lover of your country that you are about to unite yourself to us."

"To join you! For what reason?"

"To save the Republic."

"To save the Republic! There was a time, General, when you had the honor of being its mainstay; but now the glory of saving it will rest with us."

"Saving it!" echoed Bonaparte; "and with what? With the means which your Constitution gives you? Look at it! it is crumbling in every direction; and even if I did not give it a push now, it would fall in a few days."

"Ah," exclaimed Moulin, "then you confess your hostile projects at last!"

"My projects are not hostile," exclaimed Bonaparte, with a stamp of his foot. "The Republic is in peril; it must be saved, and I will do it!"

"You 'will'?" repeated Gohier. "It seems to me that it is the Directory and not you who should say 'I will!'"

"There is no longer any Directory."

"Ah, I was told that you announced that as a fact a moment before we entered."

"From the moment that Sieyès and Roger-Ducos sent in their resignation, there was no longer a Directory."

"You are mistaken. The Directory exists as long as there are three remaining members; and neither Moulin nor I nor Barras have sent in our resignation."

Just then a paper was slipped into Bonaparte's hand. He read it.

"You yourself are mistaken," he said; "Barras has sent in his resignation, for here it is. To preserve your existence, there must be three of you; there are only two now, and he who resists the law, as you said a while ago, is a rebel." Then giving the paper to the president, he said: "Put the resignation of citizen Barras with that of citizens Sieyès and Ducos, and announce that the Directory has ceased to exist. I will tell my soldiers of it myself."

Moulin and Gohier were stunned; this defection of Barras destroyed all their plans.

Bonaparte had nothing more to do in the Council of the Ancients, and he had much to attend to in the court of the Tuileries. He went down, followed by those who had accompanied him. As soon as the soldiers caught sight of them, cries of "Vive Bonaparte!" resounded more loudly and eagerly than ever. He leaped upon his horse, and made a sign that he wanted to speak to them. Ten thousand voices which had been rending the air with acclamations were suddenly silent, as if hushed by an enchanter's wand.

"Soldiers!" said Bonaparte, in a voice so powerful

that it was heard on all sides, "your companions in arms on the frontiers are deprived of the necessaries of life; the people are miserable; and the authors of all this misery are those against whom I assemble you to-day. I hope before long to lead you to victory; but first we must make those who would oppose good public order and the general prosperity powerless to injure."

Whether from weariness of the dictatorial government, or from the fascination exercised upon them by the magic man who called them to victory, which had been almost forgotten in his absence, cries of enthusiasm arose, and like a train of lighted powder spread from the Tuileries to the Carrousel, and from there to the adjacent streets.

Bonaparte took advantage of the movement, and turning to Moreau, he said: "General, I am going to give you a proof of my great confidence in you. Bernadotte, whom I left at my house, had the audacity to tell me that if he received an order from the Directory he should execute it, no matter against whom. General, I confide to you the care of the Luxembourg; the peace of Paris and the safety of the Republic are in your hands." And without waiting for a reply, he galloped off to the other end of the line.

Moreau, through military ambition, had consented to play a part in this great drama; and he was obliged to accept the one assigned to him by its author.

Gohier and Moulin, when they returned to the Luxembourg, found everything in apparently the same condition; all the sentinels were at their posts. They retired to one of the salons to consult. But scarcely had they begun their conference when General Jubé, commanding at the Luxembourg, received the order to join Bonaparte at the Tuileries with the dictatorial guard, and to leave in his place Moreau and the soldiers who were still thrilling with Bonaparte's address. However, the two Directors drew up

a message to the Council of Five Hundred, in which they protested energetically against what had occurred. When it was done, Gohier sent it to his secretary; and Moulin, who was faint with hunger, went home to get some food.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. A moment afterwards, Gohier's secretary returned in a state of great excitement.

"Well," said Gohier, "have you not gone yet?"

"Citizen President," replied the young man, "we are prisoners in the palace!"

"What! prisoners?"

"The guard is changed, and General Jubé no longer commands."

"Who has taken his place?"

"I believe it is General Moreau."

"Moreau! impossible. And Barras, the coward! where is he?"

"Gone to his country place at Grosbois."

"Ah, I must see Moulin," said Gohier, hastening towards the door.

But at the entrance to the corridor he found a sentinel who barred his passage. Gohier insisted.

"No one can pass," said the sentinel.

"What! no one can pass?"

"No."

"But I am President Gohier!"

"No one can pass; those are the orders."

Gohier saw that he could make no headway against these orders. It was impossible to use force. He went back.

In the mean time General Moreau had gone to Moulin's house; he went to justify himself. But without listening to him, the ex-director turned his back. As Moreau persisted, he said, —

"General, go into the ante-chamber; that is the place for jailers!"

Moreau hung his head, as he realized the snare into which his reputation had fallen.

At five o'clock Bonaparte returned to the Rue de la Victoire; all the generals and superior officers in Paris accompanied him. Even the blindest, those who had not understood the 13th Vendémiaire or the return from Egypt, had now seen the flaming star of his future shining above the Tuileries; and as they could not all be planets, each one strove for the place of satellite.

Cries of "Vive Bonaparte!" which, starting from the Rue du Mont-Blanc, rolled like an ocean of sound towards the Rue de la Victoire, announced to Josephine the return of her husband. The impressionable creole was filled with anxiety; she hastened towards him, so overcome with emotion that she could not pronounce a single word.

"Come, come!" said Bonaparte, becoming his own kindly self, "calm yourself; everything that could be accomplished to-day has been done."

"And is everything done?"

"Oh, no!" replied Bonaparte.

"Then it will have to begin again to morrow?"

"Yes, but to-morrow it will be only a formality."

The formality was a little severe, but every one knows the result of what took place at St.-Cloud. We will therefore not stop to relate it, merely naming the result, for we are in haste to return to the main subject of our drama, from which we have been turned aside for the moment by the grand historical figure that we have introduced.

A final word. On the 20th Brumaire, at one o'clock in the morning, Bonaparte was nominated first consul, and he immediately associated with himself Cambacérès and Lebrun under the title of second consuls, being resolved

as he did so to concentrate in his own person not only the duties of his colleagues, but those of the ministers as well. On the night of the 20th Brumaire he slept at the Luxembourg, in the bed of citizen Gohier, which, as well as that of his colleague Moulin, had been given up during the day.

Roland was named governor of the castle of the Luxembourg.

CHAPTER XXV.

AN IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION.

Some little time after this military revolution, a report of which had resounded through all Europe, whose surface it had disturbed for a moment, as the tempest disturbs the surface of the ocean, — some time afterwards, we say, on the morning of the 30th Nivose, better known to our readers as the 22d of January, 1800, Roland in going through the immense correspondence which came to him daily in his new office found among many others a letter which read as follows: —

Monsieur the Governor, — I know your loyalty, and you will see that I value it. I must talk with you for five minutes. During these five minutes I shall be masked. I have a demand to make of you. You will grant it or refuse it, as you think best; but in either case, as I attempt to penetrate into the palace of the Luxembourg only in the interests of Consul Bonaparte and the royalist cause to which I belong, I ask your word of honor to allow me to go away as freely as I enter.

To-morrow, at seven o'clock in the evening, if I see a solitary light in the window above the clock, it will tell me that Colonel Roland de Montrevel has pledged me his word of honor, and I will present myself boldly at the little door in the left wing of the palace looking out upon the garden. I will strike upon it three blows at intervals, after the manner of free-masons.

In order that you may know beforehand to whom you are pledging or refusing your word, I will sign this with a name

which is known to you, and which has already, under circumstances that you probably have not forgotten, been pronounced before you.

MORGAN,
Chief of the Companions of Jehu.

Roland read and reread the letter. He remained thoughtful for a moment, and then suddenly rising he went into the private office of the consul. Silently he held out the letter to him. The latter read it without betraying the least emotion or even astonishment, and then replied laconically, —

"You had better put the light there." And he returned the letter to Roland.

The next day, at seven o'clock in the evening, the light was burning in the window, and at five minutes past seven Roland himself was waiting at the garden door. He had waited there only a few minutes, when three blows were struck upon the door after the manner of freemasons; that is to say, two and one. The door opened immediately, and a man wrapped in a cloak was boldly outlined upon the gray atmosphere of the winter night. As for Roland, he was entirely concealed in the shadows. Seeing no one, the man with the cloak remained for a moment motionless.

"Come in," said Roland.

"Ah, is it you, Colonel?"

"How do you know it is I?" asked Roland.

"I recognized your voice."

"My voice! But during the few minutes we were together in the same room at Avignon I did not speak a single word."

"In that case I must have heard your voice somewhere else."

Roland tried to think where the chief of the compan-

ions of Jehu could have heard his voice; but the latter continued gayly, —

"Because I know your voice, Colonel, is it any reason why we should stay at this door?"

"Not at all," said Roland. "Take hold of the skirt of my coat and follow me. I purposely forbade them to light the staircase or the corridor which leads to my room."

"I thank you for your kindness, but with your parole I could go from one end of the palace to the other, even were it lighted *a giorno*, as the Italians say."

"You have my word of honor," replied Roland; "so you need not fear to come up."

Morgan did not need to be encouraged; he followed his guide boldly. At the head of the staircase Roland turned into a corridor which was equally dark, took a few steps along it, and then opened the door of his own room. Morgan followed him. The room was lighted, but only by two candles. When he had entered, Morgan threw off his cloak, and placed his pistols on the table.

"What are you doing?" asked Roland.

"With your permission," said the other, gayly, "making myself comfortable."

"But these pistols which you have taken off?"

"Ah, did you think I brought them for your benefit?"

"For what, then?"

"For the police. You must know that I am not inclined to allow myself to be taken by citizen Fouché without burning the mustache of the first one of his satellites who puts his hands on me."

"Then since you are here, you think you have nothing more to fear?"

"I am sure of it," said the young man, "since I have your word."

"Then why do you not take off your mask?"

"Because my face is only half my own. The other half belongs to my companions; and who knows, if one of us were to be recognized, whether it would not bring all the others to the guillotine? You see, Colonel, I do not disguise from myself the game that I am playing."

"Then why do you play it?"

"Ah, that is a fine question! Why do you go upon the battle-field, where a bullet might put a hole through your chest, or a cannon-ball take off your head?"

"That is very different, if you will permit me to say so. On the battle-field I risk an honorable death."

"Ah, then you think that if I had my neck cut off by a revolutionary triangle, I should be dishonored? Not the least in the world. I call myself a soldier as well as you, only all cannot serve their cause in the same way. Each religion has its heroes and its martyrs. Happy in this world are the heroes; happy in the next are the martyrs!"

The young man pronounced these words with a conviction which could not fail to move, or rather astonish, Roland.

"But," continued Morgan, abandoning this high strain and returning to the gayety which appeared to be a distinctive trait in his character, "I did not come here to talk political philosophy; I came to ask you to arrange an interview for me with the First Consul."

"What, with the First Consul!" exclaimed Roland.

"Yes; read my letter again. I told you that I had a request to make of you."

"Yes."

"Well, this request is to allow me to speak with General Bonaparte."

"I beg your pardon, but as I did not expect this request —"

"It astonishes you; it even makes you uneasy. But, my dear colonel, you may, if you cannot depend upon my word, search me from head to foot, and you will see that I have no other weapons than these pistols, and that even those are there upon the table. Better still, take one in each hand, place yourself between the First Consul and me, and blow my brains out at the first suspicious movement that I make. Do you like the conditions?"

"Before I disturb the First Consul in order that he may listen to the communications which you have to make to him, will you assure me that these communications are worth the trouble?"

"Oh, as to that, I will answer for it." Then with his joyous accent Morgan added: "I am for the moment the ambassador of a crowned head; or rather of one which has lost its crown, — a circumstance which does not render it the less worthy of the respect of noble hearts. Besides, I will not take much of the general's time, and the moment the conversation becomes tedious he can dismiss me. I will not make him say it twice, you may be sure."

Roland remained silent and thoughtful for a moment. "And it is to the First Consul alone that you can make this communication?"

"To the First Consul alone, since he alone can reply to me."

"Very well; wait for me; I will go and tell him."

Roland took one step towards the general's room; then he stopped and cast an uneasy glance towards the heap of papers on the table.

Morgan caught the look. "Oh," he said, "you are afraid that I will read these papers in your absence? If you only knew how I detest reading! I dislike it so much that if my death-warrant was on this table I should not

give myself the trouble to read it. I should say, 'That is the clerk's business; let him attend to his own work.' Monsieur Roland, my feet are cold, and I am going to sit in your armchair and warm them while you are gone. You will find me there when you get back, and I shall not have stirred."

"Very well," said Roland. And he went into the First Consul's room.

Bonaparte was talking with General Hédouville, commander-in-chief of the troops of la Vendée. When he heard the door open he turned around impatiently. "I told Bourrienne that I could see no one."

"So he said as I came along, General. But I told him that I was no one."

"You are right. What do you want. Speak quickly."

"He is in my room."

"Who?"

"The man from Avignon."

"Ah, what does he want?"

"He wants to see you."

"To see me personally?"

"Yes, you, General. Does that astonish you?"

"No; but what can he have to say to me?"

"He has obstinately refused to tell me; but I do not think he is either a beggar or a fool."

"No, but perhaps he is an assassin."

Roland shook his head.

"Well, since you answer for him — "

"Besides, he does not refuse to allow me to be present at the conference. I shall be between you and him."

Bonaparte thought for a moment. "Let him enter," he said.

"You know, General, that except for me — "

"Yes, General Hédouville will have the goodness to

wait for a moment. Our conversation cannot be finished in one sitting. Go, Roland."

Roland went out through Bourrienne's office, entered his own room, and found Morgan there, warming his feet, as he had said. "Come, the First Consul is waiting for you," said the young man.

Morgan rose and followed Roland. When he entered Bonaparte's room the latter was alone. He glanced quickly at the chief of the companions of Jehu, and recognized the same man whom he had seen at Avignon.

Morgan stopped a few steps from the door, and in his turn looked at Bonaparte curiously. He was confirmed in his suspicion that it was he whom he had seen at the *table d'hôte* on the day when he had taken such risks to restore the two hundred louis stolen by mistake from Jean Picot.

"Come in," said the First Consul.

Morgan bowed and took three steps forward. Bonaparte replied to his bow by a slight movement of his head.

"You told my *aide-de-camp*, Colonel Roland," he said, "that you had some communication to make to me."

"Yes."

"Does that communication demand a *tête-à-tête?*"

"No; although it is of such importance —"

"That you would like better to see me alone?"

"Yes; but prudence —"

"The most prudent thing in France, citizen Morgan, is courage."

"My presence here, General, is a proof that I am entirely of your opinion."

Bonaparte turned towards the young colonel. "Leave us alone," he said.

"But, General," the latter began.

Bonaparte approached him and said in a low tone: "I see what is the matter. You are curious to know what

this mysterious highway gentleman can have to say to me; but you may rest assured you will know it later."

"It is not that; but if, as you said just now, this gentleman should be an assassin?"

"Did you not tell me that he was not? Come, do not be childish; leave us."

Roland went out.

"We are alone, sir," said the First Consul; speak!"

Morgan, without replying, drew a letter from his pocket, and presented it to the general. The latter examined it. It was addressed to him, and sealed with the three *fleurs de lis* of France.

"Oh," he said, "what is this, sir?"

"Read it."

Bonaparte opened the letter and looked at the signature first. "Louis?" he said.

"Louis," repeated Morgan.

"What Louis?"

"Louis de Bourbon, I suppose."

"The Comte de Provence, the brother of Louis XVI."

"And consequently Louis XVIII., since his nephew the Dauphin is dead."

Bonaparte looked again at the stranger; for it was evident to him that the name of Morgan which he had given was only an assumed one, intended to conceal his true one. After which, looking again at the letter, he read: —

January 3, 1800.

Whatever may be their apparent conduct, sir, men like you never inspire uneasiness. You have accepted a high position, and I do not grudge it to you. Better than any one you know what force and power are necessary to make the happiness of a great nation. Save France from its own fury, and you will have fulfilled the wish of my heart; restore its king, and future generations will bless your memory. If you doubt

whether I am capable of gratitude, select your own place and that of your friends.

As for my principles, I am a Frenchman. No; the conqueror of Lodi, of Castiglione, and of Arcole, the conqueror of Italy and Egypt, cannot prefer vain celebrity to glory. Do not lose a precious opportunity. We can determine the glory of France. I say 'we,' because I need Bonaparte, and because he cannot do it without me. General, Europe is watching you; glory awaits you; and I am impatient to restore happiness to my people.

LOUIS.

Bonaparte turned around towards the young man, who was standing motionless and mute as a statue. "Do you know the contents of this letter?" he asked.

The young man bowed. "Yes," he said.

"But it was sealed."

"It was sent unsealed to the one who gave it to me, and even before he confided it to me he made me read it so that I might know its importance."

"And may I know the name of the one who gave it to you?"

"Georges Cadoudal."

Bonaparte started slightly. "Do you know Georges Cadoudal?" he asked.

"He is my friend."

"Why did he give this to you rather than to some one else?"

"Because he knew that when he told me this letter must be put into your hand, it would be put there as he desired."

"Well, sir, you have kept your promise."

"Not entirely."

"Why not? Have you not given the letter to me?"

"Yes; but I promised to bring back an answer."

"And suppose I tell you that I will not give you one?"

"You will have replied. Not exactly as I would have wished, to be sure; but still you will have replied."

Bonaparte remained lost in thought for a few minutes. Then, shrugging his shoulders, he said: "They are fools."

"Who are?" asked Morgan.

"Those who write me such letters. Fools! arch fools! Do they think that I am one of those who follow other people's methods; who model themselves upon other men? Shall I do as Monk did? Shall I create a Charles II.? It is not worth the trouble. When one has on his record Toulon, the 13th Vendémiaire, Lodi, Castiglione, Arcole, Rivoli, and the Pyramids, one is quite another man from Monk, and has a right to aspire to something else besides the duchy of Albemarle and the command of the armies of his Majesty Louis XVIII. by land and by sea."

"But they told you to make your own conditions, citizen Consul."

Bonaparte started at the sound of this voice, as if he had forgotten that any one was there. "To say nothing," he continued, "of the fact that it is a ruined family, a dead branch of a rotten tree. The Bourbons have intermarried until their race has degenerated; all its strength and vigor were exhausted in Louis XIV. Do you know history, sir?" Bonaparte continued, turning towards the young man.

"Yes, General," he replied.

"Well, you must have remarked in history, and particularly in that of France, that each race has its point of departure, its apex, and its decadence. Look at the direct line of the Capets; beginning with Hugues, they reach their height with Philip Augustus and Louis IX., and fall with Philip V. and Charles IV. Look at the

Valois; beginning with Philip VI., they have their culminating point in Francis I., and fall with Charles IX. and Henry III. Then look at the Bourbons; beginning with Henry IV., they have their highest point in Louis XIV., and fall with Louis XV. and Louis XVI. Only they fall lower than the others, — lower in debauchery with Louis XV., lower in misfortune with Louis XVI. You speak to me of the Stuarts, and offer Monk to me as an example. Can you tell me who succeeded Charles II.? James II. And who succeeded James II.? William of Orange, a usurper. Would it not have been better, I ask you, if Monk had put the crown on his own head in the first place? Well, now, if I should be fool enough to give the throne to Louis XVIII., like Charles II., he would have no children; his brother, Charles X., would succeed him, and he would be driven from the throne by some William of Orange. Oh, no! God has not put the destiny of this beautiful and great country which we call France into my hands, merely for me to return it to those who have played with it and lost it."

"You will take notice, General, that I did not ask you all that."

"But I ask you — "

"I believe you are doing me the honor to mistake me for posterity."

Bonaparte started, turned around, saw to whom he was speaking, and was silent.

"I only wanted," continued Morgan, with a dignity which astonished the one to whom it was addressed, "a 'yes' or 'no.'"

"And why did you want that?"

"To know whether we should continue to make war upon you as upon an enemy, or whether we should fall at your feet as before a savior."

"War!" said Bonaparte, "war! Those who make war against me are mad. Do they not see that I am the chosen one of God?"

"Attila said the same thing."

"Yes; but he was the elected one of destruction, and I am elected in a new era. The grass withered where he had passed; but harvests will ripen wherever I put my plough. War! tell me what has become of those who waged it with me? They are lying upon the plains of Piedmont, Lombardy, and Cairo."

"You forget la Vendée. La Vendée is still standing."

"Standing, perhaps; but what of its generals? What of Cathelineau, Lescure, La Rochejaquelein, D'Elbée, Bonchamp, Stofflet, and Charette?"

"You speak only of men. The men have been cut down, it is true, but the principle remains; and around it are fighting, to-day, D'Autichamp, Suzannet, Grignon, Frotté, Châtillon, and Cadoudal. Perhaps these younger ones are not worth as much as their elders; but if they die in their turn, that is all that can be asked of them."

"Let them beware! If I decide upon a campaign in la Vendée, I shall not send either Santerre or Rossignol."

"The Convention sent Kléber, and the Directory Hoche."

"I should not send any one; I should go myself."

"Nothing worse can happen to them than to be killed, like Lescure, or shot, like Charette."

"It may happen to them that I pardon them."

"Cato has taught us how to escape Cæsar's pardon."

"Ah, take care! you are quoting a republican."

"Cato is one of those men whose example can be followed, no matter to what party they belong."

"If I should tell you that I hold la Vendée in my hand —"

"You!"

"And that if I wish, there will be peace there in three months!"

The young man shook his head.

"You do not believe me!"

"I hesitate to do so."

"If I tell you that what I say is true; if I prove it to you, and tell you by what means, or rather by what men, I will accomplish it!"

"If a man like General Bonaparte tells me anything, I will believe it; and if the thing which he tells me is the restoration of peace to la Vendée, I tell him in my turn: Take care! It would be better to have la Vendée fighting than la Vendée conspiring. La Vendée fighting is a sword; la Vendée conspiring is a dagger."

"Oh, yes; I know your dagger," said Bonaparte; "here it is!" And he took from a drawer the poniard which he had received from Roland's hands, and put it upon the table within reach of Morgan. "But," he added, "it is a long distance from Bonaparte's chest to the assassin's dagger. Try it." And he advanced towards the young man, fixing upon him his burning gaze.

"I did not come here to assassinate you, sir," said the young man, coldly. "Later, if I believe your death indispensable to the triumph of the cause, I shall do my best. Have you nothing else to say to me, citizen Consul?" continued the young man.

"Yes; tell Cadoudal that when he decides to fight foreigners instead of fighting the French, I have in my desk a colonel's commission for him, all signed."

"Cadoudal commands, not a regiment, but an army. You did not wish to descend from the rank of Bonaparte to that of Monk; why do you desire him to become a colonel instead of a general? Have you nothing else to say to me, citizen Consul?"

"Yes; have you any means of communicating my reply to the Comte de Provence?"

"You mean to King Louis XVIII.?"

"We will not quarrel about words; to the one who wrote me."

"His messenger is at the camp of the Aubiers."

"Very well; I have changed my mind. I will answer him. These Bourbons are so blind that perhaps he would misinterpret my silence." And Bonaparte, sitting down at his desk, wrote the following letter, with an indignation which made the writing firm and legible: —

I have received your letter, sir. I thank you for the good opinion of myself which you express in it. You should not desire to return to France. To do it, you would have to walk over two hundred thousand corpses. Sacrifice your own interests to the peace and happiness of France, and history will give you credit for it. I am not insensible to the troubles of your family, and I shall learn with pleasure that you are surrounded by everything which can contribute to the peacefulness of your retreat.

BONAPARTE.

And folding and sealing the letter he wrote the address: "M. le Comte de Provence." He handed it to Morgan, and then called Roland, as if he knew very well that the latter was not far off.

"What is it, General?" asked the young officer, appearing on the instant.

"Take this gentleman as far as the street," said Bonaparte. "Until then you will be responsible for him."

Roland bowed in token of obedience, and allowed the young man, who went away without uttering another word, to pass him, following on behind.

But before he went out Morgan cast a last look at Bonaparte. He was standing motionless and silent, his arms crossed, and his eyes fixed upon the dagger, which seemed

to occupy his thoughts more than he would have confessed to himself.

In crossing Roland's room, the chief of the companions of Jehu took up his cloak and pistols. While he put the latter into his belt, Roland said, —

"So the First Consul has shown you the poniard which I gave him?"

"Yes," replied Morgan.

"Did you recognize it?"

"No, not that one in particular. All our poniards are alike."

"Well," said Roland, "I am going to tell you where that one came from."

"Ah, where did it come from?"

"From the breast of one of my friends, where your companions, or perhaps you yourself, had buried it."

"Possibly," replied the young man, carelessly; "but your friend must have deserved this punishment."

"My friend wanted to see what was going on at night in the monastery of Seillon."

"He did wrong."

"But I myself did the same thing on the previous night. Why did it not then happen to me?"

"Because, doubtless, some talisman saved you."

"Sir, I will tell you something. I am a man who prefers a straight road and broad daylight; I have therefore a horror of mystery."

"Happy are those who can walk in broad daylight upon a straight road, Monsieur de Montrevel."

"That is why I am going to tell you the oath that I have taken. When I drew that dagger from my friend's breast, as delicately as possible, in order not to draw out his soul with it, I took an oath that there should be henceforth war to the death between his assassins and myself;

and it was in a great measure for the sake of saying this to you that I gave you the word of honor which has protected you."

"That is an oath which I hope you will forget."

"It is an oath which I shall keep upon all occasions; and you will be kind enough to furnish me with one as soon as possible."

"In what way, sir?"

"By agreeing to meet me either in the Bois de Boulogne or in the Bois de Vincennes. There is no need of saying that we fight because you and your friends struck Lord Tanlay with a dagger. No; you can give any reason you like. For example," — Roland thought for a moment. "The eclipse of the moon will take place on the 12th of next month. Will that pretext answer?"

"The pretext would do well enough, sir," replied Morgan, in a melancholy tone of which one would have believed him incapable, "if the duel itself suited me. You have taken an oath, and you will keep it, you say. Very well; all those who are initiated into the Company of Jehu take an oath also. It is that they will not expose in a personal quarrel a life which belongs to their cause and not to them."

"Then you assassinate, but you do not fight?"

"You are mistaken; we do fight sometimes."

"Be good enough to point out to me an occasion when I may see this phenomenon."

"That is easily done. You have only, with five or six resolute men like yourself, to travel in some diligence which carries government money, and defend it when we attack it; and the occasion which you ask will have been found. But if you will take my advice, you will do better than that; you will not get in our way."

"Is that a threat, sir?" asked the young man, lifting his head.

"No," said Morgan, in a gentle, almost beseeching voice; "it is a prayer."

"Is it addressed to me in particular, or should you say it to every one?"

"To you in particular." The chief of the companions of Jehu emphasized the last word.

"Ah," said the young man, "then I am fortunate enough to interest you?"

"Like a brother," replied Morgan, always in the same gentle and caressing tone.

"Then," said Roland, decidedly, "this must be a wager."

Just then Bourrienne entered. "Roland," he said, "the First Consul is asking for you."

"Give me time to take this gentleman to the street door, and I will be with him."

"Make haste; you know he does not like to wait."

"Will you follow me, sir?" said Roland to his mysterious companion.

"I have been ready for a long time, sir."

"Come, then." And Roland, taking the same route by which he had brought Morgan, conducted him, not to the garden door, for the garden was closed, but to that leading to the street. When they reached it he said to Morgan: —

"Sir, I have given you my word of honor, and have kept it faithfully; but that there may be no misunderstanding between us, tell me that this word of honor was for this time and this day alone."

"That is how I intended it, sir."

"Then you give me back my word?"

"I should like to keep it, sir; but I recognize that you are free to take it from me."

"That is all I desire. *Au revoir*, Monsieur Morgan."

"Allow me not to echo that wish, Monsieur de Montrevel."

The two young men bowed to each other with perfect courtesy, Roland returning to the Luxembourg, and Morgan going in the shadow of the wall through one of the little streets which led to the Place Ste.-Sulpice.

We will follow the latter.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE BALL OF THE VICTIMS.

MORGAN had scarcely gone a hundred feet when he took off his mask: in the streets of Paris he ran a much greater risk of being noticed with a mask than without one. When he came to the Rue Taranne, he knocked at the door of a little house which stood at the corner of this street and the Rue du Dragon, entered, took a candle from a shelf and the key of No. 12 from a nail, and went upstairs without exciting more notice than any lodger who comes to his room after a short absence. Ten o'clock sounded as he opened the door of his room. He counted the strokes carefully, for the light of his candle did not reach the clock upon the mantelpiece, and then he muttered, —

"Good! I shall not be too late."

In spite of this probability, Morgan seemed desirous of losing no time. He put a lighted taper to a great fire which was laid in the chimney, and which immediately blazed up; then he lighted four candles, — all that there were in the room, — placed two on the mantelpiece and two on the bureau opposite, opened a bureau drawer, and put on the bed a complete costume in the height of style. It was composed of a coat cut short and square in front and long behind, of a delicate color, between sea-green and pearl-gray; a waistcoat of chamois velvet, with eighteen mother-of-pearl buttons; an immense white cravat of the finest linen; pantaloons of white kersey-

mere, with a knot of ribbons at the place where they buttoned just above the calf; and stockings of pearl-gray silk, with diagonal stripes of the same green as the coat; and elegant pumps, with diamond buckles. The indispensible eye-glass was not forgotten. As for the hat, it was the same as that which Carle Vernet has bestowed upon his beau of the Directory.

When all was set forth, Morgan appeared to wait impatiently. At the end of five minutes he rang. A boy appeared.

"Has not the hairdresser come yet?" asked Morgan.

"Yes, citizen," replied the boy, "he came; but you had not yet returned, so he said that he would come again later. But just as you rang the bell some one knocked at the door, and it was probably —"

"Here I am! here I am!" called a voice on the staircase.

"Ah, bravo!" said Morgan. "Come, master Cadenette, you must make an Adonis of me."

"That will not be so very difficult, Monsieur le Baron," said the hairdresser.

"Come, come! do you want to compromise me absolutely, citizen Cadenette?"

"Monsieur le Baron, I beg of you, call me simply Cadenette; that will honor me, for it will be a proof of familiarity. But do not call me citizen; fie! that is a Revolutionary term; and even in the worst of the Terror I always called my wife Mme. Cadenette. Now, I beg your pardon for not having waited for you; but there was a large ball this evening in the Rue du Bac, a ball of the Victims," — the hairdresser emphasized the word. "I should have thought that Monsieur le Baron would have been there."

"Ah," said Morgan, laughing, "so you are still a royalist, Cadenette?"

The hairdresser put his hand tragically upon his heart. "Monsieur le Baron," he said, "it is not only a matter of conscience, but of state."

"I can understand how it is a matter of conscience, master Cadenette, but of state! What the devil has the honorable corporation of hairdressers to do with politics?"

"What! Monsieur le Baron," said Cadenette, making his preparations to dress his client's hair, "do you ask that, — you, an aristocrat?"

"Hush, Cadenette!"

"Monsieur le Baron, between *ci-devants* such things can be said."

"And so you are a *ci-devant?*"

"A thorough one. What style of head-dress will you have?"

"Dog's-ears, and the hair turned up at the back."

"With an eye of powder?"

"Two eyes if you like, Cadenette."

"Ah, Monsieur, just think! for five years there was no *poudre à la maréchale* to be found except at my place. Monsieur le Baron, men have been guillotined for a box of powder."

"I have known people who have been for less than that, Cadenette. But tell me how you are a *ci-devant,*— I like to understand everything."

"It is very simple. You admit, do you not, that among corporations there are more or less aristocrats?"

"Oh, yes, according as they approach the higher classes of society."

"That's it. Well, we hold the higher classes of society by the hair. I myself dressed Mme. de Polignac's hair one evening; my father did the same for Mme. du Barry, and my grandfather for Mme. de Pompadour. We

had our privileges, Monsieur; we carried our sword. It is true that to escape accidents, which might happen between such hot-heads as we were, our swords were for the most part of wood; but even if we did not have the real thing, we had the symbol of it. Yes," continued Cadenette, with a sigh, "the times were beautiful, not only for hairdressers, but for all France. We were let into all secrets and all intrigues; nothing was concealed from us; and there is not a single instance where a secret was ever betrayed by a hairdresser. Look at our poor queen: to whom did she intrust her diamonds? To the great, the illustrious Leonard, the prince of the coiffure! Ah, well, it has only taken two men to overturn the scaffolding of a power which was based upon the perukes of Louis XIV., the puffs of the Regency, the crimps of Louis XV., and the *galeries* of Marie Antoinette."

"And these two men, these levellers, these revolutionists — who are they, Cadenette? Tell me, that I may, as much as lies in my power, devote them to public execration."

"M. Rousseau and citizen Talma, — M. Rosseau, because he said, 'Return to Nature;' and citizen Talma, who invented the *coiffures à la Titus.*"

"That 's true, Cadenette, that 's true."

"Well, when the Directory came in, we had a little hope. M. Barras had never left off powder, and citizen Moulin had kept his queue. But you can easily see how the 18th Brumaire has spoiled everything; for how in the world can any one dress M. Bonaparte's hair? — There!" continued Cadenette, puffing out the dog's-ears of his client, "you have the true aristocrat's hair, — soft and fine as silk, and holding the fire until it looks like a veritable wig. Look at yourself, Monsieur le Baron; you are a perfect Adonis! Ah, if Venus had seen you, it was not

of Adonis that Mars would have been jealous." And Cadenette, proud of his completed work, handed a mirror to Morgan, who looked at himself complacently.

"Well, well," he said to the hairdresser, "you are certainly an artist. Remember this coiffure: if they ever cut off my neck, this is the coiffure that I shall choose, as there will probably be ladies at my execution."

"Monsieur le Baron wishes to be regretted," remarked the hairdresser, seriously.

"Yes; and in the mean time, my good Cadenette, here is a crown to pay you for your trouble. Have the goodness as you go down to tell them to call a carriage for me."

Cadenette sighed. "Monsieur le Baron," he said, "there was a time when I would have said to you, 'Show yourself at the court in that coiffure, and I shall be amply repaid;' but there is no longer a court, Monsieur, and a man must live. You shall have your carriage."

So saying, Cadenette sighed again, put Morgan's crown in his pocket, made the reverential bow of hairdressers and dancing-masters, and left the young man to finish his toilet.

When once the hair was dressed, the whole toilet was as good as done; the cravat alone took some little time, but Morgan went through the ordeal like a veteran, and as eleven o'clock struck, he was ready to enter his carriage. Cadenette had not forgotten to deliver the message, and a fiacre was at the door. Morgan sprang into it, exclaiming,—

"No. 60 Rue du Bac."

The fiacre took the Rue de Grenelle, turned up the Rue du Bac, and stopped at No. 60.

"Here is double fare, my friend," said Morgan, "on condition that you will not stop at the door."

The man took his three francs and disappeared around the corner of the Rue de Varennes.

Morgan looked up at the house; he might have been excused for thinking that he had made a mistake, so dark and silent did it appear. However, he did not hesitate; he knocked in a peculiar manner. The door opened. At the end of the courtyard was a building brilliantly lighted. The young man went towards it; as he drew nearer, he heard the sound of instruments. He went up one flight and found himself in the dressing-room. He gave his cloak to a servant who had charge of the wraps.

"Here is a number," said the man to him. "As for your weapons, put them in the gallery where you can recognize them again."

Morgan put the number in his pocket, and entered a great gallery, which had been transformed into an arsenal. Here was a collection of weapons of all sorts and sizes, — pistols big and little, rifles, swords, and daggers. As the ball might at any moment be interrupted by an invasion of the police, it was important that each man should be able instantly to transform himself from a dancer to a combatant.

Freed from his weapons, Morgan entered the ballroom.

We are afraid our pen will fail to give our readers a correct idea of the appearance of this ball. As a general thing, as its name indicated, no one was admitted to this ball except those who had a right to go, by reason of having relatives who had been sent to the scaffold by the Convention or the Commune of Paris, or who were shot by Collot-d'Herbois, or drowned by Carrier; but as during the three years of the Reign of Terror just passed the guillotine had had more victims than anything else, the costumes in the majority were those of victims of the scaffold. Thus, the greater part of the young girls whose mothers and elder sisters had died beneath the hand of the executioner wore the costume which had been donned

by mother or sister for the supreme and dreadful ceremony; namely, the white dress, the red shawl, and the hair cut even with the neck. Some, to add to this costume, already so characteristic, a still more significant detail, had put around their neck a thread of red silk, fine as the edge of a razor, indicating the passage of the steel between the mastoid muscles and the collar-bone. As for the men, their coat collars were turned back, their shirts open, their necks bare, and their hair cut.

But many had another right to come to this ball besides that of having had victims in their family; many had themselves made victims. There were men there, forty or forty-five years old, who had been brought up in the boudoirs of the beautiful courtesans of the seventeenth century, — who had known Mme. du Barry at Versailles, Sophie Arnoult at the house of M. de Lauraguais, and Duthé with the Comte d'Artois; who had borrowed from the politeness of vice the varnish with which they covered their ferocity. They were still young and handsome; they entered the salon shaking their odorous locks and perfumed mustaches, — a precaution which had its advantages, for if they had not smelt of amber and vervain, they would have given forth the odor of blood. There were men there twenty-five and thirty years old, dressed with exquisite elegance, who were a part of the association of Avengers; who had seemed to be seized with a monomania for assassination and murder; who delighted in shedding blood, and whose appetite for it never was satiated; who, when the order came to kill, killed whoever was indicated, were he friend or foe; who made a business of murder; who received the bloody draft which required of them the head of a Jacobin, and who paid it at sight. There were young men there, eighteen or twenty years old, almost children, but children who were nour-

ished like Achilles, — from the marrow of wild beasts; as Pyrrhus was fed with the flesh of bears. They were a part of that strange generation which springs up after a great political convulsion, as the Titans uprose after chaos, the hydras after the deluge, and as vultures and crows appear after a slaughter. There was a bronze spectre, immovable, implacable, which they called Retaliation. And this spectre mingled with the living; it entered gilded salons and made a sign with a glance, a gesture of the hand, a movement of the head, and people followed it.

The Terror had affected great cynicism in its clothing, a Lacedæmonian severity in its repasts, and in short the deep-rooted scorn of a savage for everything pertaining to art and beauty. The Thermidorian reaction, on the contrary, was distinguished by elegance, ornamentation, and wealth; it exhausted all luxuries and all voluptuousness, as under the reign of Louis XV.; but it added the luxury of vengeance, the voluptuousness of blood. All this youthfulness went by the name of Fréron, or "jeunesse dorée."

Why should Fréron, rather than any other, have had this strange and fatal honor? I cannot tell you; my researches, — and those who know me will tell you that when I want a thing I do not spare any pains to get it, — my researches have taught me nothing. It was a caprice of Fashion; and Fashion is the sole goddess who is more capricious than Fortune.

Our readers of to-day hardly know who Fréron was, and Voltaire's laughing-stock is better known than he who was the patron of these exquisite assassins. One was the son of the other. Louis-Stanislas was the son of Élie-Catherine; the father died of rage at seeing his paper suppressed by the keeper of the seals, Miromesnil. The other, irritated by the injustice of which his father had been the

victim, had at first ardently embraced Revolutionary principles, and in place of the "Année littéraire," which was killed in 1775, he created the "Orateur du peuple." He was sent into the South as a special agent, and the people of Marseilles and Toulon still remember his cruelties. But all was forgotten when on the 9th Thermidor he came out as an enemy to Robespierre, and aided in hurling from the altar of the Supreme Being the colossus which had made of itself a god. Fréron, repudiated by the Mountain, which abandoned him to the heavy jaws of Moise Bayle; Fréron, repulsed with disdain by the Gironde, who gave him up to the imprecations of Isnard, — Fréron, as the terrible and picturesque orator Du Var says, all naked and covered with the leprosy of crime as he was, was received, caressed, and petted by the Thermidorians; then from that camp he passed to that of the Royalists; and without having done anything to deserve the fatal honor, found himself suddenly at the head of a powerful party of youth, energy, and vengeance, placed between the passions of the times, which threatened everything, and the powerlessness of the law, which endured everything.

It was through this gilded youth, this party of Frérons, lisping, giving their word of honor on all occasions, that Morgan pushed his way. All these young people, it must be added, in spite of the costumes they wore, in spite of the memories which those costumes awoke, were hilariously gay. It was incomprehensible, but it was a fact. Explain if you can this dance of death, which at the beginning of the fifteenth century, with the fury of a modern galop, unrolled its rings in the cemetery of the Innocents, and let fall in the midst of the tombs fifty thousand of its funereal dancers.

Morgan was evidently looking for some one. A young exquisite, who was just putting into a bonbonnière held

out to him by a charming victim a blood-red finger, the only part of his delicate hand which had escaped the almond paste, tried to stop him, in order to give him the details of the expedition from which he had brought back this bloody trophy; but Morgan smiled, pressed the hand which was gloved, and said, —

"I am looking for some one."

"Is it urgent?"

"Company of Jehu."

The young man with the bloody finger allowed him to pass.

An adorable fury, as Corneille would have said, whose hair was confined by a dagger with a point as sharp as that of a needle, barred his passage, saying, —

"Morgan, you are the handsomest, the bravest, and the worthiest of being loved of all those who are here. What reply have you for a woman who says that to you?"

"I reply that I love her," said Morgan, "and that my heart is too narrow for one hate and two loves." And he continued his search.

Two young men who were disputing, one saying "He is English," and the other, "He is German," stopped him.

"Ah," exclaimed one, "here is a man who can decide for us."

"No," returned Morgan, trying to break through the barrier which they formed, "for I am in a hurry,"

"You have only to say one word," returned the other. Saint-Amand and I have laid a wager. He says that the man who was judged and executed in the monastery of Seillon was a German, and I say he was English."

"I don't know," replied Morgan; "I was not there. Ask Hector; he presided on that evening."

"Where is Hector?"

"Tell me rather where is Tiffauges; I am looking for him."

"Yonder, at the end of the room," said the young man, indicating a spot where the dancing was yet more joyous and animated. "You may recognise him by his waistcoat; neither are his pantaloons to be despised. I am going to have some like them the first chance I get."

Morgan did not take time to ask what there might be remarkable about Tiffauges's waistcoat, or by what odd cut or precious material his pantaloons had won the approbation of a man as expert in such matters as the one to whom he had just spoken. He went straight to the spot indicated, and saw the one for whom he was looking dancing a *pas d'été*, and seeming from his cleverness and "knitting" (if I may be pardoned the technicality) to have come from the salons of Vestris himself. Morgan made a sign to the dancer. Tiffauges stopped instantly, bowed to his partner, led her to a seat, excused himself on the plea of urgent business, and took Morgan's arm.

"Did you see him?" asked Tiffauges.

"I have just left him," replied the other.

"And you gave him the king's letter?"

"I gave it to himself."

"Did he read it?"

"Immediately."

"And did he give a reply?"

"He gave two, one verbal and one written; the latter includes the former."

"And you have it?"

"Here it is."

"Do you know the contents?"

"It is a refusal."

"Positive?"

"Emphatically so."

"Does he know that from the moment we no longer have any hope of him we shall treat him as an enemy?"

"I told him so."

"And what did he reply?"

"He did not reply, — he shrugged his shoulders."

"What do you think he means to do?"

"It is easy to guess."

"Does he want to keep the power for himself?"

"It looks like it to me."

"The power, but not the throne?"

"Why not the throne?"

"He would not dare to make himself king."

"Oh, I don't know whether he wants to be a king, exactly; but he means to be something."

"But he is nothing but a soldier of fortune."

"My friend, in these days it is better to be a self-made man than the grandson of a king."

The young man remained lost in thought. "I will tell Cadoudal," he said.

"And add that the First Consul said these very words: 'I hold la Vendée in my hand, and if I like I can restore peace there in three months.'"

"That is a good thing to know."

"You know it; let Cadoudal know it, and make your own profit out of it."

Just then the music ceased suddenly; the hum of the dancing was stopped; there was a great silence, in the midst of which four names were pronounced by a sonorous and emphatic voice. The four names were those of Morgan, Montbar, Adler, and D'Assas.

"I beg your pardon," said Morgan to Tiffauges, "they are probably arranging some expedition in which I am to take part; therefore, to my great regret, I am forced to

bid you adieu. But before leaving you, will you allow me to look a little more closely at your waistcoat and pantaloons? I have heard them spoken of, and hope you will pardon my curiosity."

"Why, certainly!" said the young Vendéenn.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE BEAR-SKIN.

And with a swiftness and complacency which did honor to his courtesy, he approached the candles which were burning on the mantelpiece.

The waistcoat and pantaloons appeared to be made of the same material; but what was that material? It was this which puzzled all the connoisseurs. The pantaloons were not remarkable in cut, and were of a light color, between chamois and flesh color; there was nothing unusual about them, except that they were seamless, and that they fitted like a glove. The waistcoat, on the contrary, had two characteristic signs which called attention more particularly to it; it had been pierced with three bullets, whose holes were still there; and a little red paint around them made them look as if the blood were still spouting forth; besides which, on the left side, was painted the bleeding heart which served as a means of recognition among the Vendéeans.

Morgan examined the objects with the greatest attention, but without result. "If I were not in such haste," he said, "I would guess the riddle by myself; but, as you know, the committee have probably received some news. It is about money, and you can tell Cadoudal; but it will have to be taken to him. I usually command these expeditions, and if I delay, another will take my place; tell me, therefore, what your clothes are made of."

"My dear Morgan," said the Vendéean, "you have perhaps heard that my brother was taken in the neighborhood of Bressuire, and shot by the Blues."

"Yes, I knew it."

"The Blues were retreating; they left the body under a hedge; we pursued them so closely that we came up just behind them. My brother's body was still warm. In one of his wounds the branch of a tree was stuck, with the words, 'Shot as a brigand by me, Claude Flageolet, corporal in the Third Paris Battalion.' I took care of my brother's body, and I had a piece of the skin removed from his chest; it had in it three bullet-holes, which eternally cried for vengeance; and of this I made my battle waistcoat."

"Ah," exclaimed Morgan with an astonishment which was not unmixed with terror, "so this waistcoat is made of your brother's skin? And the pantaloons?"

"Oh," replied the Vendéean, "that is another thing. Those are made with the skin of citizen Claude Flageolet, corporal in the Third Paris Battalion."

Just then the same voice was heard again, calling for the second time, and in the same order, upon the names of Morgan, Montbar, Adler, and D'Assas. Morgan darted from the room. He went the length of the ballroom, and turned towards a little salon on the other side of the dressing-room. His three companions, Montbar, Adler, and D'Assas, were already waiting for him there.

With them was a young man wearing the costume of a cabinet messenger, the green-and-gold coat of the government livery. He had the dusty top-boots, the little cap with a visor, and the dispatch-bag, which constitute the essential paraphernalia of a cabinet courier. A very complete map of Cassini was on the table.

Before telling what the courier was doing there, and why

the map was spread out upon the table, let us glance at the three new personages whose names just now resounded through the ballroom, and who are destined to play an important part in the remainder of this story.

The reader is already acquainted with Morgan, at once the Achilles and the Paris of this strange organization, — Morgan, with his blue eyes and black hair, his tall and well-knit figure, and his graceful form; his eye which never seemed dull; his mouth with its fresh lips and white teeth, and ever ready smile; his remarkable face, composed of a mixture of elements which seemed strangers to one another, and in which one read strength and tenderness, sweetness and energy; and all this combined with a dazzling expression of gayety which became almost terrible when one considered that this man was eternally courting death, and death in its most frightful form, — upon the scaffold.

As for D'Assas, he was a man of thirty-five or more, with bushy hair, which was growing gray, although his eyebrows and mustache were still as black as ebony; as for his eyes, they were of that admirable shade which approaches chestnut. He was an ex-captain of dragoons, admirably built for physical and moral war, whose muscles showed strength, and whose face indicated obstinacy. For the rest, he was of a noble figure and great elegance of manners, perfumed like a dancing master, and always, either from habit or love of luxury, smelling at a flask of English salts or a scent-box containing the most subtle perfumes.

Montbar and Adler, whose true names were not known, any more than were those of Morgan and D'Assas, were usually called among their companions "the inseparables." Imagin Damon and Pythias, Euryale and Nisus, Orestes and Pylades, at twenty-two years, — one joyous, loqua-

cious, and noisy; the other sad, silent, and thoughtful; sharing everything alike, from their dangers to their gold; completing each other, reaching together the limits of all extremes; each in danger forgetting himself to watch over the other, — and you will have an idea of Montbar and Adler.

It need scarcely be said that all three were companions of Jehu. They were assembled, as Morgan had suspected, on business for the company. When Morgan entered, he went straight to the pretended courier and shook hands.

"Ah, my dear friend," said the latter, making a movement backward as if to indicate that however good a horseman one may be, one cannot ride with impunity for fifty leagues on the saddle of posthorses, "you are having a fine time, you people here in Paris; and compared to you, Hannibal was on briars and thorns! I only glanced into your ballroom in passing, as became a poor cabinet courier, bearing despatches from General Massena to the First Consul; but it seemed to me that you had a fine choice of victims there. But, my poor friends, you must say a temporary adieu to all that. It is disagreeable; it is unfortunate; it is heart-rending: but the House of Jehu before all."

"My dear Hastier," said Morgan.

"Hallo!" said Hastier; "no proper names, if you please, gentlemen! The Hastier family is an honest family of Lyons, carrying on business, as they say, on the Place des Terreaux, from father to son. They would be very much humiliated if they knew that their heir was a cabinet courier, travelling on the high-roads with the national wallet on his back. Call me Lecoq as much as you like, but Hastier never; I do not know Hastier. Do you, gentlemen?" he continued, addressing Montbar, Adler, and D'Assas.

"No," replied the three young men, "and we ask pardon for Morgan, who made a mistake."

"My dear Lecoq," began Morgan again.

"There," interrupted Hastier; "I will answer to that name. Now, what do you want to say to me?"

"I want to say that if you were not the antipodes of the god Harpocrate, whom the Egyptians represented with a finger on his mouth, instead of listening to your nonsense we should have known before this the reason for this costume and this map."

"And if you do not know it already," said the young man, "it is your fault and not mine. If it had not been necessary to call you twice, engrossed as you were with some beautiful Eumenide, demanding of the handsome young living man vengeance for some old dead parents, you would know as much as these gentlemen, and I should not have to repeat myself. Now, listen! it is simply a question of a remnant of the treasure of the bears of Berne, which, by order of General Masséna, General Lecourbe has sent to the First Consul. A mere trifle, a hundred thousand francs, which they dare not send by way of the Jura on account of the partisans of M. Teysonnet, and which they have sent by way of Geneva, Bourg, Macon, Dijon, and Troyes, — a much safer road, as they will find."

"Very good!"

"The news was sent to us by Renard, who came from Gex on a posthorse, and told l'Hirondelle, who is stationed for the moment at Châlon-sur-Saône; he sent it on to Auxerre to me, Lecoq, who have just come forty-five leagues to tell you. As for the minor details, here they are. The treasure left Berne on the 28th Nivose, in the year VIII. of the Republic, triple and indivisible. It should arrive to-day at Geneva; it will leave there to-morrow on the diligence from Geneva to Bourg; so that by setting out this

very night, on the day after to-morrow you can, my dear brothers in Israel, meet the treasure of Messieurs the bears between Dijon and Troyes, near Bar-sur-Seine or Châtillon. What do you say?"

"Well," said Morgan, "it seems to me there should not be two opinions about it; of course we should never have permitted ourselves to touch the money of my lords the bears of Berne if it had never left their lordships' coffers; but since its destination has been already changed, I see no harm in changing it a second time. But how shall we go?"

"Have n't you a post-chaise here?"

"Yes."

"Have you any horses to take you to the next post?"

"They are in the stable."

"Have you not each of you a passport?"

"We each of us have four."

"Well, then?"

"Well, we cannot stop the diligence in a post-chaise; it is true we do not give ourselves any too much trouble, but we do not take our ease quite to that extent."

"And why not?" asked Montbar. "It would at least have the merit of being original. I do not see why, since they board ships from small boats, we cannot also board a diligence from a post-chaise. We had not thought of this before; shall we try it, Adler?"

"I should ask nothing better," replied the latter; "but what would you do with the postilion?"

"That's so," said Montbar.

"That has been provided for, my children," said the courier. "A messenger has been sent to Troyes; you will leave your post-chaise with Delbauce, and you will find there four horses all saddled and stuffed with oats; you will calculate your time, and the day after to-morrow, or

rather to-morrow, for midnight has already struck, the money of my lords the bears will pass a very uncomfortable quarter of an hour."

"Shall we change our costume?" asked D'Assas.

"What for?" asked Morgan; "it seems to me that we are very presentable as we are; never has diligence groaned under the weight of better dressed men. Give a final glance at the map; transfer from the refreshment table to the carriage a pie, a cold fowl, and a dozen bottles of champagne; arm ourselves at the arsenal; throw some good cloaks about us, — and good-by!"

"That is a good idea!" said Montbar.

"I should think so," said Morgan. "We will kill the horses, if necessary; we will be back here by seven o'clock in the evening, and we will show ourselves at the Opera."

"Which will establish an alibi," said D'Assas.

"Exactly," replied Morgan, with his irrepressible gayety; "how can any one suppose that men who applaud Mlle. Clotilde and M. Vestris at eight o'clock in the evening could have been occupied in the morning, between Bar and Châtillon, in settling accounts with the conductor of a diligence? Come, now, a glance at the map, to choose our place."

The four young men leaned over Cassini's work.

"If I presumed to give you any advice as to the place," said the courier, "it would be to lie in ambush a little this side of Massu; there is a ford opposite Riceys, — see, there!" And the young man pointed out the precise spot upon the map. "I should go to Chaource, there; from Chaource you have a government road, straight as an arrow, which leads you to Troyes; there you find your carriage again, and you take the road to Sens instead of that to Coulommiers; the gossips — and there are some in the provinces — who saw you pass on the previous night,

will not be astonished to see you going back again the next day; you will be at the Opera at ten o'clock instead of eight, which is much better style, and you will have been neither seen nor known, I warrant you."

"Agreed, as far as I am concerned," said Morgan.

"Agreed," repeated the three others in chorus.

Morgan drew out one of the two watches whose chains hung at his belt; it was one of Petitot's *chefs-d'œuvre* in enamel, and on the double case which protected the painting was a diamond cipher. The beautiful toy had been made for Marie Antoinette, who had given it to the Duchesse de Polastron, and she had given it to Morgan's mother.

"One o'clock in the morning," said Morgan; "come, gentlemen, at three o'clock we must be changing horses at Lagny."

From that moment the expedition was begun, with Morgan as its chief; he no longer consulted, he ordered. D'Assas, who commanded in his absence, yielded him implicit obedience when he was present.

A half an hour afterwards a carriage containing four young men wrapped in their cloaks was stopped at the barrière Fontainbleau by an official who demanded their passports.

"Oh," he said, as he passed his head in at the window, "so you are going to Grosbois, to hunt with the citizen Barras? Go ahead, coachman!"

The coachman cracked his whip, and the carriage passed on.

END OF VOL. I.

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